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"Three little maids from school are we."
THE MIKADO.

Sibyl Grey
Leonora Braham
Jessie Bond

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY BARRAUD, 263, OXFORD STREET, W.

THE THEATRE.

A Monthly Review

OF

THE DRAMA, MUSIC, AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY

CLEMENT SCOTT.

NEW SERIES.

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1885.

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LIST OF PORTRAITS.

Miss Eastlake in "Hoodman Blind."

Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft.

Mr. Moy Thomas.

Mr. John S. Clarke in "The Rivals."

Mr. E. L. Blanchard.

Mr. George Barrett in "Hoodman Blind."

Mr. Charles Warner.

Miss Florence Warden.

Misses Sibyl Grey, Leonora Braham, and Jessie Bond in "The Mikado."

Miss Florence West in "Called Back."

Miss Wallis in "Adrienne Lecouvreur."

Miss Laura Linden.

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THE THEATRE.

Play-bills, Old and New.

By Percy Fitzgerald.

IN a well-known passage the play-loving Elia opens a pleasant retrospect which touches many a heart. "The casual sight," he says, "of an old play-bill, which I picked up the other day—I know not by what chance it was preserved so long—tempts me to call to mind a few of the players, who make the principal figures in it. It presents the cast of parts in the 'Twelfth Night' at the old Drury Lane Theatre two-and-thirty years ago. There is something very touching in these old remembrances. They make us think how we *once* used to read a play-bill—not as now, peradventure, singling out a favourite performer, and casting a negligent eye over the rest; but spelling out every name, down to the very mutes and servants of the scene—when it was a matter of no small moment to us whether Whitfield or Packer took the part of Fabian; when Benson and Burton and Phillimore—names of small account—had an importance beyond what we can be content to attribute now to the time's best actors. 'Orsino by Mr. Barrymore'—what a full Shakespearean sound it carries! How fresh to memory arise the image and the manner of the gentle actor!"

These charming thoughts and judiciously-chosen words have a certain charm, and "what a full Shakespearean sound it carries!" that is, the name of the character and its actor has a chime that will be intelligible to many. But these things are, perhaps, associated with the old, and rather vulgar, form of play-bill—the small, attenuated, and faintly-printed scrap of *note paper* which now is made to do duty has little witchery of this kind. We may gaze at it even for the hour, without finding any of those memory-compelling charms. The delicate, exquisite touch of Elia can alone ennoble these things; for it is, in truth, only "the casual sight" of

an old play, not so much familiar acquaintance, that is so potent There are collectors who gather vast series of play-bills year after year, bind them up in volumes; and, it must be confessed nothing more dreary or monotonous could be conceived than a deliberate inspection. An old day-book or ledger would be as entertaining. Of late years play-bills, like everything else, are diligently gathered, and considered of much value. An early "Garrick bill" is worth from a guinea to two guineas, and any dated in the first quarter of last century would command much greater prices. These curiosities have shared in the general rise of prices, and only a few years back the writer could obtain rare bills for a couple of shillings apiece!

The "casual sight" of the bills of certain famous first appearances operate magically, for they seem charged with mysterious associations, fluttering hopes and fears, the indifference or hostility of the audience, wonderful issues that later and constant success has proved; with the vast wealth and fame that was to accrue, all which failure might have checked, or even destroyed. These things make a glance at the soiled, frayed piece of paper singularly interesting. It is wonderful, too, to think how these frail memorials should have been preserved so long.

Many years ago a gentleman was fortunate enough to possess the bill of Garrick's first appearance at Goodman's Fields in 1741. He had it reprinted for giving away, but even these copies are not to be procured now. It was of the size then in vogue, some ten or twelve inches long by eight or nine broad:—

GOODMAN'S FIELDS.

At the Theatre in Goodman's Fields, this day
Will be performed,
A Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music
DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS,
Tickets at Three, Two, and One Shilling.
Places for the Boxes to be taken at the Fleece Tavern, near
the Theatre.
N.B. Between the Two Parts of the Concert, will be presented, an Historical Play, called the
LIFE AND DEATH OF
KING RICHARD THE THIRD.
Containing the Distresses of K. Henry VI.
The artful acquisition of the Crown by King Richard,
The murder of Young King Edward V. and his Brother, in the Tower,
THE LANDING OF THE EARL OF RICHMOND,
And the Death of King Richard, in the memorable Battle of Bosworth Field, being the last that was fought between

the Houses of York and Lancaster ; with many
other true Historical Passages.
The Part of *King Richard*, by a GENTLEMAN,
(*Who never appeared on any Stage.*)

King Henry, by Mr. Giffard ; *Richmond*, Mr. Marshall ; *Prince Edward*, by Miss Hippisley ; *Duke of York*, Miss Naylor ; *Duke of Buckingham*, Mr. Paterson ; *Duke of Norfolk*, Mr. Blades ; *Lord Stanley*, Mr. Pagett ; *Oxford*, Mr. Vaughan ; *Tressel*, Mr. W. Giffard ; *Catesby*, Mr. Marr ; *Radcliff*, Mr. Crofts ; *Blunt*, Mr. Naylor ; *Tyrrel*, Mr. Pattenham ; *Lord Mayor*, Mr. Dunstall; *The Queen*, Mrs. Steel ; *Duches of York*, Mrs. Yates.

And the part of Lady Anne
By Mrs. GIFFARD.
With Entertainments of Dancing,
By Messrs, Frower, Madame Duvalt,
And the two Masters and
Miss Granier.
To which will be added
A Ballad Opera of One Act, called
THE VIRGIN UNMASKED.
The part of Lucy by Miss Hippisley.
Both of which will be performed
Gratis by persons for
this occasion.
The Concert will begin exactly at Six O'Clock.

As is well known, this gratis concert was a device to avoid the penalties of the Licensing Act, though it is astonishing how so transparent an evasion could have been tolerated.

Mrs. Siddons was announced in the most unpretending way, and it is curious to look at her bill, when she made her *début* in London where she is set down as "Portia, by a young lady (being her first appearance)." A bill, or copy of a bill, of her appearance when a child has been preserved :—

Worcester, April 16th, 1767.

Mr. KEMBLE'S Company of Comedians.

At the Theatre at the KING'S HEAD, on Monday evening next, being the 20 of April instant, will be performed a CONCERT of MUSICK, to begin at exactly half an hour after six o'clock. TICKETS to be had at the usual places. Between the parts of the Concert will be presented *gratis* a celebrated COMEDY called

The TEMPEST, or ; The ENCHANTED ISLAND.

(*As altered from Shakespeare by Mr. Dryden and Sir W. D'Avenant*).

With all the Scenery, Machinery, Musick, Masters, and other Decorations proper to the piece, entirely new.

Alonso (Duke of Mantua)	Mr. Kemble
Hyppolito (a youth who never saw a woman)	Mr. Siddons
Stephan (Master of the Duke's Ship), ...	Mr. Kemble
Amphitrito	Mrs. Kemble
Ariel (the Chief Spirit)	Miss Kemble
And *Milcha*	Miss F. Kemble

The performance will open with a representation of a tempestuous sea (in perpetual agitation) and storm, in which the usurper's ship is wrecked : the wreck ends with a beautiful shower of fire. And the whole to conclude with a CALM AT SEA, in which appears Neptune, Poetick God of the Ocean, and his Royal consort, Amphitrite, in a chariot drawn by sea horses, accompanied with Mermaid Tritons, &c.

The writer possesses a really unique curiosity connected with this great actress, viz., a wall poster, of the usual size, announcing her last appearance. In the early days of printing a play-bill was a matter of licence, or monopoly, exactly as we believe it is now in Paris—at least for posters. And there is in the Stationers' Records such a licence granted to one John Charlewood in 1587. It occurs to few to think what was the origin of the phrase "bill posting" and "posters"—one of the oldest and most traditional of phrases. The bill, it seems, was taken and affixed to the various "posts" in the street, which, as may be conceived, were of a moderate size, contrasting oddly with our poster of many sheets. The distribution of bills in the country "circuits" was attended by certain incidents that did not contribute to the self-respect of the poor actor. Often a respectable tragedian, on the occasion of his benefit, was to be seen hurrying through the streets of the town carrying a sheaf of his own bills, which he gave to the passers-by or left at the doors of the different houses. He had also to call on influential persons and solicit their patronage, and readers will recall Dickens's admirable description of Nickleby going round with Miss Snevellicci to solicit patronage for her "bespeak." Indeed, the whole Crummles episode is admirable as a lifelike and accurate picture of the old provincial theatrical life.*

As most theatrical students know, the humours of country theatres are, or used to be, singularly piquant and diverting, perhaps because of the contrast between the state and grandeur of the incidents which they represent and the sad straits and squalor of their condition. The shifts and devices are truly ludicrous, and a bill has been preserved which again suggests Mr. Crummles and his fame :—

At a large room, in the New Street, Ashton, Friday Evening, June 30th, 1797, will be presented a favourite Comedy, called,

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

Sir Peter Teazle, Mr. Hillyard; Joseph Surface, Mr. Hillyard, Jun.,; Sir Benjamin Backbite, Master Hillyard; Trip, Master T. Hillyard; and Careless, Miss Hillyard.—Lady Teazle, Miss P. Hillyard; Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Hillyard. End of the play, a song by Mr. Hillyard.

---

* A bill distributor of the Chester Theatre died in 1801, aged ninety-two. When he was fifteen years old he met with this strange adventure: He was supposed to have died of a fever, was laid out, and duly carried to the grave on the shoulders of four men, when he suddenly knocked off the lid of the coffin, and was found to be alive. For many years later he used to entertain his friends with the wonderful things he had seen in his trance.

To which will be added, a farce, called
BARNABY BRITTLE;
OR, A WIFE AT HER WIT'S END.

Sir Peter Pride, Mr. Hillyard, Jun.; Mr. Lovermore, Master Hillyard; Clodpole Mr. Hillyard; Mrs. Brittle, Miss P. Hillyard; Damaris, Miss Hillyard; Lady Pride, Mrs. Hillyard.—To begin at eight oclock: admission, 1s.; children 6d.

Here is yet another singular programme, which reads like something in a burlesque:—

BILL OF KILKENNY THEATRE ROYAL.
By his Majesty's Company of Comedians.
(The last night, because the Company go to-morrow to Waterford).
On Saturday, May 14, 1793,

Will be performed, by command of several respectable people in this learned metropolish, for the benefit of Mr. KEARNS,

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET.

Originally written and composed by the celebrated Dan. Hayes of Limerick, and inserted in Shakespeare's works.

Hamlet by Mr. Kearns, (being his first appearance in that character,) who, between the acts, will perform several solos on the patent bagpipes, which play two tunes at the same time.

Ophelia by Mrs. Prior, who will introduce several favourite airs in character, particularly "The Lass of Richmond Hill," and "We'll all be unhappy together," from the reverend Mr. Dibdin's Oddities.

That extraordinary being, Elliston, may be considered the founder of the puffing play-bill, and his bills exhibit the "form and pressure" of his character in a singular way. Owing to his vast flourishings, descriptions, vauntings, &c., the bill had expanded from the almost square single sheet into the long-shaped article of "silver paper" to which we were accustomed in our schoolboy days, and even became a double sheet. This was, perhaps, the first important introduction of this truly theatrical record, printed in a rich lamp-black looking ink, which came off on the kid gloves and went through the silver paper. The name of the play was in vast, glistening, ebony-looking characters.

When he assumed the reins at Drury Lane, in succession to the committee of lords and gentlemen, his grand style overflowed into every bill. The centre was printed in crimson letters, contrasting with the black type. This was his official, stately mode of communicating with his friends, where he could be oracular and convey meaning hints as to his future plans. It is when we have read over Lamb's inimitable account of him that we really understand these utterances, which are genuine after their kind. Thus, when he had engaged Miss Wilson, the singer, he declared (in red type) that "the unbiassed opinion of the most brilliant, overflowing, and

admiring audience that ever graced a Theatre Royal, and the enthusiastic fervour that accompanied the opera throughout, justifies the proprietor"—not in running the piece till further notice, no—"in congratulating the musical world on this vast accession of talent." Day by day he insists, in evidence of his success, that the enthusiasm was "beyond any former precedent. Not an order has been given or will be given. The most generous and exhilarating fervour was displayed." "It is an absolute fact that at this moment there are more than 3,000 places taken of Mr. Rodwell, a box book-keeper." A new melodrama was "the most successful piece that was *ever* produced." A delightful touch was: "Without modestly reverting to the days of Garrick, the managers trust that their present and future efforts will, without any temporary gasconade of the non-admission of orders," &c. "The preparations for the Coronation pageant proceeded with the greatest activity, but never extended beyond the first intention." When a new piece promised had not been produced, he excused the delay by "the demand for boxes by families, and a conviction that the complicated scenery employed in this splendid exhibition cannot, when once laid aside, be replaced under a considerable time." Another piece, though "received with tumultuous approbation," had yet encountered hostility, and "every factitious opposition previously organised being completely overpowered, the numerous communications on this subject that have been received will in due time be brought before the public." A more characteristic exhibition was his proclamation on the occasion of the competition between the rival singers, Miss Giroux and Miss Taylor, the former being engaged at his house Beginning by declaring that Miss Giroux had "neither personally nor otherwise encouraged any hostility to the professional pretensions of a young person called Taylor," he went on to beg of "the enlightened portion of the British public which does her the honour to approve her performances that they will add to so proud a distinction the favour of abstaining from an unseemly contest, nor

> Mix with lurid slaves,
> Bravoes and common stabbers,

but allow at once mind to triumph over malice." In short, nothing more amusing or astonishing could be conceived than the examination of a series of these Elliston play-bills.

Nothing gives such evidence of the "form and pressure of the

time" as changes in the shape and character of the play-bill. Were the whole series examined scientifically, and with the laboriously minute investigation applied in the case of Homeric researches, a good deal of the social life and character of the particular era might be evolved. They are significant of the changes in the theatre itself—the lighting, character of the audience, taste for advertisement—of the advance of refinement, and, perhaps, the decay of the stage. A yet more interesting view would be the comparison of the various styles fashionable in the different countries, which reflect in national characteristics in a most striking way. Most singular of all is the departure from the original purpose of the bill, which was merely to supply the names of the players and the characters they played.

Chetwood, the garrulous yet entertaining prompter, famous for his inaccuracies, tells us that in his day (before 1750) the rule was to set out the bill according to the hierarchical order of the characters, not according to the importance of the performer. "For example," he says, "in 'Macbeth,' Duncan, King of Scotland, appeared first in the bill, though acted by an insignificant person, and so every other actor appeared according to his dramatic dignity, all of the same-sized letter. But latterly, I can assure my readers, I have found it a difficult task to satisfy some ladies, as well as gentlemen, because I could not find letters large enough to please them, and some were so fond of elbow room that they would have shoved everybody out but themselves." A pleasant satirical touch at the fretful vanity of the profession.

This sensitiveness developed so alarmingly that a kind of scientific system had to be devised, and the name and rank of the player had to be denoted, not merely by his place in the bill, but by other devices, such as the size of the type—large, smaller, and smallest capitals being used; as well as a sort of isolation, the leading player being set standing alone, as:

AND

ROMEO by Mr. BARRY.

It thus became more impressive to be put last, though when there were two players of equal rank, one was placed at the top with a space below him, the other at the bottom with a space above him! The "and" and the "by" became of importance. But one of the Woffington-Barry bills will show all these nice distinctions better than description. Here there are no less than five descending

grades of capitals, Barry, Dyer, Gibson, Anderson, and Collins having each a special form, while, moreover, each has a position akin to the divisions between boxes and galleries :—

For the benefit of Mr. D Y E R.
THEATRE ROYAL in *Covent-Garden*,
This present *Thursday*, being the 8th of *April*, 1736.
M A C B E T H.
Macbeth by Mr. BARRY,
Macduff by Mr. DYER,
King by Mr. GIBSON.

Malcolm by Mr. ANDERSON,
Donalbain by Mr. BENNETT,
Seyton by Mr. REDMAN,

Seyward by Mr. WHITE,
Doctor by Mr. WIGNEL,
Fleance by Miss MULLART,

Banquo by Mr. SPARKS,
Lenox by Mr. R I D O U T,
Hecate by Mr. A R T H U R,
1st *Murtherer* by Mr. BENCRAFT, 2d *Murtherer* by Mr. MARTEN,
WITCHES by Mr. *Collins*, Mr. *Dunstall*, and Mr. *Cushing*,
Lady *Macduff* by Mrs. B A R R I N G T O N,
Lady *M A C B E T H*
By Mrs. W O F F I N G T O N.
With the Original MUSICK.
The *Vocal Parts* by Mr. *Lowe*, Mr. *Howard*, Mr. *Legg*, Mr. *Baker*, Mr. *Roberts*, Mrs. *Lampe*, Mrs. *Chambers*, Miss *Young*, Mrs. *Vincent*, and Others.
And the *Dances* and *Decorations* incident to the PLAY.
Likewise, The *F I N G A L I A N D A N C E*
By Miss H I L L I A R D and Others.
And Les *STATUES ANIMEES*
By Monf. GUERIN, Mad. CAPDEVILLE, &c.
To which will be added a Dramatic PIECE (*never Acted but Once*) call'd
The *Frenchified* LADY never in *Paris*.
Taken from DRYDEN *and* COLLEY CIBBER, Poets-Laureat.
The Part of the *Frenchified Lady*
By Mrs. W O F F I N G T O N.
Boxes 5 *s.* Pit 3 *s.* First Gallery 2 *s.* Upper Gallery 1 *s.*
On Saturday, *ALEXANDER* the Great.

When, however, Kemble was appointed stage-manager at Drury Lane in 1788, he determined to reform this pernicious custom altogether, abolishing not merely these invidious distinctions of type, but simply setting down the names of the performers according to their rank in the piece. This change—significant of the sensible, manly character of the great actor—he also introduced at Covent Garden in 1803. The most sensible form of bill was surely the one which obtained for about one hundred and fifty years back, during the Garrick era, and of which a specimen has been given. The theatres were then large and rather dimly lighted ; the type was, therefore, bold, conspicuous, and legible. It was printed on a good-sized sheet, meant to lie on the front of the box. It contained not

a word beyond what concerned the play and the actors. The paper was strong and thick; it set out the comedy or tragedy with its dozen or so of characters, and the necessary farce or afterpiece. Curious, too, is it to contrast the mode of announcing the entertainments for the night in the daily papers with that now in fashion. The newspapers actually paid an annual sum to the managers for information as to the pieces chosen, and in an obscure corner these were set out, abbreviated, as "D. L. (Drury Lane), The Constant Couple: and C. G. Macbeth." On the occasion of benefits and first-class performances the announcements were made at greater length, but not more than eight or ten lines were devoted to the subject. Contrast this with the theatrical columns of our daily newspapers! Beside the official column in which the programme of to-night is set out, we find "all the resources of advertisement" repetitions, capitals, quoted "opinions of the Press," assertions that no places are to be obtained, or rather that places may be obtained by being "booked one month in advance," while the player modestly suffers to be appended to his name the most extravagant encomiums. There are varieties of arts in these unmeaning and possibly useless exhibitions; some three columns of close type are often filled out, at an enormous expense to managers, many of whom pay from one to two thousand a year to the journals. It may be doubted whether anything is really gained by this outlay, and probably if all managers agreed to revert to the old system, and to take no advantage of each other, the public might in time be accustomed to go without the news that such a piece is "an enormous success."

The large type and very black ink, with the expanse of "silver paper," was, in truth, evidence of a process of national development, associated as they were with the vast green curtain and the scent of oranges, "the cry of nonpareils" an indispensable playhouse accompaniment in those days. "As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruitresses was, 'Chase some oranges, chase some nomparels, chase a bill of the play'—chase for choose. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a Heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed, the breathless anticipation I endured." These crude elements, though somewhat adding to the poetical associations, belong to the past. And the bill itself was quite in keeping. With, however, the reform that set in within the last fifteen years, the building of small and elegant theatres, and the

development of the stall system, the old bill was out of keeping. The fashionable patrons required something handier, neater, and more drawing-room like. Hence the sheet of embossed note-paper, nicely "scented by Rimmel," who had a contract for all the theatres, and which was the invariable pattern for some years. These were printed in good legible type, and were convenient. By and by came newer managers, who devised fresh patterns of bills. The St. James's and Court Theatres now adopt pale blue cardboard, opening like a book, the St. James's being of a triangular pattern. When many years ago an American manager took this theatre, he introduced what was called the "Bill of the Play," in which the list of characters was set off with some columns of dramatic anecdotes, jokes, &c., to be read between the acts. The Gaiety, under the business-like direction of Mr. Hollingshead, was one of the first to introduce the system of advertising extending to a double sheet, in which a rivulet of theatrical information meandered through meadows of invitations to buy boots and shoes, champagnes, &c., a sadly unwholesome practice which the Americans have carried to an extravagant pitch. An American play-bill is truly like a small advertising newspaper, and we can scarcely find the actors' names, which are relegated to a small corner.

Of late a new artistic departure has been made in connection with one or two theatres, and which has, no doubt, been suggested by the taste and design displayed in Christmas cards. When Mr. Tennyson's luckless play, "The Promise of May"—who will forget that diverting night?—was brought out at the Olympic, the occasion was celebrated by an exquisite card, on which were displayed May blossoms and other decorations in the finest and most finished style. It was printed in pale May-flower pink and gold, and, however artistic, it must be said the names and characters were so faint and delicate as to be almost illegible. This was followed up by the management of the Savoy Theatre, who have issued some charming artistic folding cards—souvenirs of "Princess Ida," and "The Sorcerer," and "Iolanthe." These elegant trifles present some scenes from the respective plays, and were from the designs of a lady, but executed by a German firm. In another generation or two these will be sought as great rarities. They really operate as souvenirs of pleasant evenings, and call up the scenes.

Another curious and original form of play-bill was issued this Christmas to celebrate the pantomime of "Whittington and his

Cat." This was a quarto pamphlet, or tract, ingeniously got up to imitate one of the old block books; the edges frayed and soiled, the type Old English, the illustrations quaint and antique, while a sham red seal dangled from one of the sides. This odd conceit is cleverly done, and by and by will, no doubt, be sought as a curiosity. But all these devices are exotical, and beyond the legitimate dramatic pale.

An interesting collection might be made of fac-similes of play-bills connected with famous personages and particular occasions, which might be set off with a commentary describing the scenes, first appearances, &c. For instance, there lies before me now a bill of the St. James's Theatre for October 24, 25, and 26, 182—, when "the great and nightly increasing attractions of last week's performances has determined the management to announce them for three more nights, being the last." And there was Harmony Hall, in which Madame Sala (mother of our own Sala) appeared with John Parry:—

After which, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th times,
An entirely new Burletta, written by Boz, called
THE STRANGE GENTLEMAN.

Mr. Owen Overton (Mayor of a small town on the road to Gretna, and useful at the St. James's Arms).
The Strange Gentleman (Just arrived at the St. James's Arms), Mr. HARLEY.
Julia Lobbs (Looking for a husband at the St. James's Arms), Madame SALA.
May Wilson (Her sister, awkwardly situated at the St. James's Arms), &c.

with more variations on the same theme. As we look at the old black characters, the image of the bright-spirited, handsome Boz—then a youth starting on his career, full of hope and animation—rises before us! I have others of the same pattern, with an announced piece by Boz. Here is poor Charles Lamb's damned farce, "Mr. H.," on which he wrote so pleasantly, but which furnished him with at least the price of an Essay. Here, too, the first performance of "Money." But I should like to have the bill of "The Lady of Lyons," that perennial piece, likely enough to be performing at some London theatre, when the traveller is sitting on the broken arch of the bridge. Mr. Irving's first bill in London—lithographed in Mr. Brereton's "Life"—has also been preserved. Altogether something like history, or the associations of history, could be evolved from these frail and evanescent but most interesting memorials.

A Quiet Nook.

A SLOPING glade, all thickly carpeted
With trailing ivy and with harebells blue,
Where pine and maple, mingling overhead,
Draw back their leaves to let the sunrays through,
And then, with rustling laughter close again,
In bright derision of the quick dismay
With which the sunbeams break in golden rain,
And flash their radiance up the straggling way.
A kingly dragon-fly, with widespread wings,
Comes sailing by in conscious dignity,
And in his train a swarm of tiny things,
Like jewelled courtiers, speed his majesty,
With buzz and murmur of his doughty deeds,
Till underfoot a wild hare quakes in fear,
And, creeping 'neath the ivy, little heeds
The braggart's terror as he passes near.
The cooing murmur of the distant stream
Is borne upon the breeze's amorous sighs,
And blends its beauty with the sweet day-dream
That flings its radiance o'er this Paradise,
Till in the shade of every mossy bend
Glad fancies hover, and the bluebells chime
In softest melody that knows no end
The charm and glory of the summer-time.

M. E. W.

Forest of Arden.

"A critic, nay a night-watch constable."
LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

Wm. Terry Thomas.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,

Mr. Moy Thomas.

By H. Savile Clarke.

MR. WILLIAM MOY THOMAS, whose portrait appears in the present number of The Theatre by virtue of his position as a dramatic critic, was born on the 3rd of January, 1828. He comes of a race of solicitors all of the same Christian and surname, established for upwards of a century in Walbrook and George Street, near the Mansion House. Educated under the care of his paternal uncle, Mr. J. H. Thomas, of Trinity College, Oxford, editor of "Coke upon Littleton," of whom, as well as of his brother, Moy Thomas, an account may be found in Allibone's Dictionary of British and American authors, Mr. Moy Thomas was originally intended, like his ancestors, for the law, and he would doubtless have made an excellent lawyer. But what was a loss to law was a gain to letters, and he drifted away like many others from the legal profession into the more attractive paths of journalism.

The late Mr. Charles Dickens had, in 1850, just established the original *Household Words*, when Mr. Moy Thomas was introduced to him by Mr. Justice Talfourd, a friend of his uncle's, and having written at Mr. Dickens's request one or two stories and articles, he was at once enrolled a member of the staff of that periodical. The stories, published afterwards in two volumes, under the title of "When the Snow Falls," and the descriptive articles and tales called "Pictures in a Mirror," were selections from the varied work Mr. Moy Thomas did for *Household Words*. Subsequently, he was engaged on *The Athenæum*, and contributed also to *The North British Review*, *The Leader*, *The Economist*, *Chambers's Journal*, *The Times of India*, *Notes and Queries*, and many other journals. He was also the first editor of *Cassell's Magazine*, and wrote for it a serial story entitled, "A Fight for Life," afterwards published in three volumes, which has run through numerous editions. It was also dramatised, and the version played both in London and the country. Mr. Moy Thomas also edited, with a

memoir, the works of William Collins for the Aldine Poets, and the Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, from the original manuscripts, with notes and a memoir.

For nearly twenty years past Mr. Moy Thomas has been a valued member of the staff of *The Daily News*, contributing to its columns descriptive sketches, leading articles, and reviews, and, in 1868, he was appointed dramatic critic of that paper in succession to Mr. John Hollingshead, a post which he still retains. He has also been the dramatic critic of *The Graphic* for the last fifteen years, and for several years, under the editorship of the late Dr. Appleton, he was responsible for the theatrical articles in *The Academy*. It may be added that he was also the Honorary Secretary of the Copyright Association formed by the late Mr. Charles Reade, Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. Thomas Hardy, and others. In that capacity he drew up the scheme for the reform of our Copyright Laws, which was adopted by the Committee, and submitted by a numerous deputation of dramatists and men of letters to Lord Beaconsfield, who shortly afterwards announced the appointment of the Royal Commission on this subject.

This brief sketch of Mr. Moy Thomas's work would be incomplete without some criticism on it, and an attempt, however inadequate to estimate his position in the world of letters. His descriptive sketches in *Household Words* were bright and telling, full of keen observation and not a little humour, and his stories are remarkable for neatness of construction and much pleasant fancy. "A Fight for Life" is a vigorous and interesting novel, and well deserved the popularity it has attained. Mr. Moy Thomas's more solid contributions to literature, such as his "Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," have been admirably characterised by a far abler pen than mine. The late Mr. James Hannay wrote as follows of that work, in a review of in it some twenty years ago. After remarking that it was not every day that a standard edition of an eighteenth-century classic appeared, Mr. Hannay continued: "Mr Thomas is not only the author of some very thoughtful and graceful essays; he is one of the best critical inquirers into the literary history of all that period covered by Lady Mary's life. He is sound on Pope and Swift; great on Collins and Chatterton; unrivalled on Richard Savage. We owe to his zeal the best monograph ever written on Savage's ill-starred career; and he was the first person to clear up whatever can be known exactly of the scene and circum-

stances of Chatterton's early and awful death." I will interrupt Mr. Hannay here to note that this investigation gave rise to Mr. Hollingshead's well-known farce, "The Birthplace of Podgers." "In short," this criticism goes on, "he ranks among the leading critics of the literary biography of those times. And few, perhaps, know what an amount of research and how much keen sagacity is required by a writer of this stamp. . . . He must have patience, judgment, tact, taste, as well as great information; and his labours are infinitely important because on the certainty of historic facts depends our judgment of historic characters. A single story about a famous man often determines the world's opinion of him, and it is only the critic of Mr. Thomas's stamp who can tell us whether or not the story is a lie. We doubt if this kind of criticism is as much appreciated as it ought to be, though æsthetic criticism of very ordinary merit finds ready public acceptance."

As to Mr. Moy Thomas's anonymous journalistic work, it is clear that he would not have been so long on one of our leading dailies unless he had been a ready and skilful writer, while his published essays show him to be a man of original views, who would be welcome on the staff of any newspaper. Of his dramatic criticism, it may be said that no one stands higher in the estimation of his fellow labourers in the same field, and I believe their respect for his sound and conscientious work is shared by the most influential members of the dramatic profession and the general public. He is deeply read in the history of the stage, and in the dramatic literature both of this country and of France; and is, indeed, one of our foremost Shakespearian scholars, while the way in which, in his Monday column of theatrical *causerie*, he recently vivisected certain individuals who rushed into criticism on "Hamlet" with more valour than knowledge, should act as a wholesome warning to amateur commentators. He has, moreover, kept himself consistently clear of all clubs, cliques, and coteries, whether literary or professional, and the high tone and perfect independence of his articles is as welcome as their critical insight and their neat and incisive style. Even if one does not agree with the view he takes of this or that actor or actress, or of a piece, it is impossible not to feel that his criticism is the work of a journalist who writes under a full sense of his responsibilities, and has done his best to arrive at an honest conclusion. Would that the same could be said of every man who takes pen in hand to criticise plays and players. But, as dramatic criticism in

general is possibly too ticklish a subject for a writer who occasionally produces little pieces, no more need be added, save the expression of a cordial hope that Mr. Moy Thomas may long be spared to enrich critical literature with his thoughtful and scholarly work.

Early Life of Garrick.—Garrick and Dr. Johnson resolved to try their fortunes in London. They walked from Lichfield, and when they reached the metropolis, they were in a most pitiable state—one with a shirt and half a pair of breeches ; the other with two pairs of stockings without feet. In an obscure court in the Old Bailey, they took up their abode, and for a time lived in poverty and obscurity. Garrick's histrionic abilities at last burst forth ; success crowned his efforts ; poor Johnson was obliged to make the most of his solitary shirt, and lie in bed while it was washed. Many years after, when at the height of their fame, Johnson, at a dinner party, rallied Garrick on their early adventures. Garrick's pride vexed at so unwelcome a recollection ; he denied the assertion of his poverty. "Come, come," said the blunt philosopher, "don't forget old friends, Davy. You know that we lived in a garret for many months. When we first reached town, I had fivepence in my pockets, whilst you, Davy, had only three halfpence in yours. You know it."

Ophelia and Portia:

A FABLE FOR CRITICS.

By William Archer.

THERE is so much delightful writing in Lady Martin's recently collected letters on her favourite Shakespearean heroines, that one can scarcely forgive her publishers for issuing them in luxurious rather than in readable form. The book is not a book for the drawing-room table, but for a handy shelf in the student's library. It is to be read, not to be looked at; yet the mere bulk of the present edition is forbidding, and its white vellum boards, tasteful though they be, have a "noli me tangere" look about them. It is to be hoped that a popular edition may soon set matters right by presenting so pleasant a work in handier form.

I have nothing to say of the autobiographical portions of Lady Martin's letters, except that these fragmentary "records of a girlhood" make one wish that the writer could be induced to undertake a more systematic autobiography. For the present I propose to confine myself to the critical, or rather expository, portion of her work, which raises some interesting questions of Shakespearean interpretation.

Yet here, too, the interest is mainly personal. If these were not the thoughts of a famous actress, of a great executive artist, in short of Helen Faucit, they would lose nine-tenths of their value. We read them for the light they throw on the workings of an artist's mind in approaching the great problems of the master-poet, rather than for any novel or penetrating illumination of the problems themselves. It follows from the very nature of the case that the best actor of Shakespeare cannot be the best critic. The actor's task is in the main synthetic: analysis is the first duty of the critic. The actor must, at all hazards, make a rounded whole of the character he presents. His conception of the part is necessarily conditioned by his physical and mental idiosyncrasies, and he must bring the poet's indications into harmony with this conception as

best he may. There must always be a compromise between the poet and the actor, who, if he be possessed of real talent, will inevitably bring out of the part both more and less than the poet put into it. The poet rough-hews his creation, the actor makes a finished copy. He carves the details as his imagination suggests and his technical skill permits. He puts an expression into the features which, doubtless, lay potentially in the poet's model, but which was only one of many possible developments. He works up every minutest hair'sbreadth even to the tips of the nails, putting in texture here, ornament there, throwing out this or that contour into relief against a cunningly-devised background of shadow. In doing all this he makes the figure, in a sense, his own, for he has put a vast quantity of his own imagination into it—whence the claims of actors, ridiculed by Lamb, to rank as creative artists. But the process has involved the suppression and rejection, the slurring and scamping, of much of the poet's material—whence the opinion of those who hold that Shakespeare is most profitably studied by the fireside, and not by the footlights. Neither view is without its justification. The actor (the intelligent Shakespearean actor, at any rate) is no mere automatic mouthpiece for the poet; but, on the other hand, he can at best contribute very little towards the rational solution of critical problems.

For the critic's procedure (though critics have too often ignored the fact) should be quite different from that of the actor. He is not bound to present a rounded conception of any given character, but simply to investigate the material presented by the poet. Reverting to our illustration of the rough-hewn model, we may say that while the actor copies and elaborates it, the critic should present a series of photographs of it from every point of view. Some may object that this reduces the critic's function to nonentity, since, the models themselves being always with us, what should we care about photographs? But no one who has studied sculpture and knows the value of photography in bringing out its subtler aspects will fall into such a mistake. The critic, then, should carefully avoid, instead of imitating, the actor's method of bodying forth a character; so that while actors cannot fail to find instruction in Lady Martin's essays, critics,* I think, should read them rather by way of warning. Lady Martin's artist-like and woman-like

* I mean, of course, students of Shakespeare, not critics of acting—these will learn much from Lady Martin's reminiscences and reflections.

fantasies bear a strong resemblance, indeed, to a great deal of the received Shakespearean criticism of the past, but that merely shows how erroneous have been the methods which have brought that body of doctrine into existence.

This would sometime have been a paradox; but now, I believe, many readers will assent without difficulty. Some, however, may find a stumbling-block in my illustration of the rough-hewn model. "You ground your argument," they may say, "upon this analogy, which we declare to be false. It is rank heresy to suppose that Shakespeare left any character, or at any rate any important character, rough-hewn, unpolished, indeterminate. Each creation sprang from his brain a finished organism, coherent, articulate, symmetrical. Did not Goethe compare his characters to watches with dial-plates and cases of crystal? Does not this imply absolute perfection of finish and nicety of adjustment? Who ever heard of 'rough-hewn' watches?" No one, certainly—but Goethe is a dangerous witness to bring forward in Shakespeare's defence, for on cross-examination he will unblushingly contradict himself. Still, it is not necessary to reject Goethe's illustration in order to accept mine. A sculptor may show profound and even clairvoyant insight in his work, and yet leave it rough-hewn. No one who has stood before the tombs of the Medicis will deny that. I do not, however, expect those who are unprepared for it to accept my analogy (itself imperfect enough) without further consideration. It is precisely to this end that I propose to examine one or two of Lady Martin's reconstructions, if I may call them so, of Shakespeare's heroines.

Towards all the characters of whom she treats, Lady Martin's attitude is very naturally that of a partisan; but to Ophelia she is more than a partisan—she is a champion. "It hurts me," she says, "to hear her spoken of, as she often is, as a weak creature, wanting in truthfulness, in purpose, in force of character, and only interesting when she loses the little wits she had." As for Goethe's aspersions, not so much upon her morals as upon her temperament, Lady Martin can only treat them as "the coarse suggestions of unimaginative critics." She even finds in Ophelia "one of the strongest proofs"* that Shakespeare's prophetic soul divined a time when boy-actresses should be superseded, and "when women, true and worthy, should find it a glory to throw the best part of their

* Where are the others?

natures into those ideal types which he has left to testify to his faith in womanhood." All this enthusiasm is very natural and charming in an artist whose aim must necessarily be to obtain sympathy for the character she represents, to which end the first step is that she herself must thoroughly sympathise with it. But when we come to examine into Lady Martin's reasons for the faith that is in her, we find that she knows more, much more, of Ophelia than Shakespeare seems to have known. She knows, in the first place, the details of her girlhood, how she was left early motherless, was given over to "the kindly but thoroughly unsympathetic tending of country-folk," and grew up "lonely from choice," learning to know and love "the wild flowers in glade and dingle," and picking up, at the same time, the country ditties which come back to her memory when her wits have flown. All this is very interesting, as illustrating Lady Martin's conception of one of her most successful parts. One can easily conceive that an imaginative woman, throwing herself heart and soul into a fictitious character, and moulding it to suit her personality, should find it amusing, and even helpful, to conjure up a past for her creation; but it should always be remembered that this past belongs to Miss Helen Faucit's Ophelia, and not to Shakespeare's. To assert that this, or anything like this, ever entered the poet's head is to dogmatise without a tittle of evidence, and in the teeth of probability. For it is probable—nay, certain—that Lady Martin has, in her time, thought and brooded over Ophelia far more than Shakespeare ever did. There is nothing in the words set down for her that may not have been written with a running pen, for the sake of providing an effective part for one of those very boy-actresses whom Lady Martin holds in scorn. That the poet intended her to be fairly attractive throughout, and in her last scenes very pathetic, there can be little doubt; and, if so, the German theories which attribute to him a satirical or cynical design in her portraiture are seen to be as groundless as Lady Martin's imaginings. Both parties proceed on the assumption that Shakespeare, before writing the play, constructed a live woman, so to speak, set her up before him, and noted such characteristic traits as fitted his purpose, leaving coming generations (whether of actors or critics) to reconstruct the rest. Nothing could be further from the probabilities of the case. There is no evidence to show that Shakespeare started with more than a general conception of Ophelia's character, or that, when he wrote the last line of the

play, he knew more of her nature or her antecedents than he had stated in plain terms in the dialogue. Lady Martin, as I have said, is amply justified in supporting her conception of the part with graceful fantasies, and quite excusable in forgetting now and then that these are her own thoughts, not Shakespeare's; but critics who fall into similar errors have not the same excuse.

So much for Lady Martin's views of what precedes the rise of the curtain. Let us now follow her in one or two of her pleasant divagations between the lines of the text itself. She speaks thus of the scene between Laertes and Ophelia: "I could never get over the shock of his lecturing her 'touching the lord Hamlet' . . . Poor maiden! to have this treasured secret of her inner life . . . . thus dragged rudely to the light, discussed in the most commonplace tone, and her very maiden modesty questioned Who will say she is not truthful, when, on being asked, as she is soon after, by her father, 'What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?' she replies at once, *notwithstanding all her pain*, 'So please you, something touching the lord Hamlet?' Think how *her sensitive delicate nature* must again have shrunk and quivered, while listening to the cautious and worldly platitudes of her father, which follow! Then, to be commanded to deny herself to the one being dear to her, and with whom she had sympathy; what a feeling of *degradation as well as anguish* must have been behind the few words she utters! 'I shall obey, my lord.'" I have italicised three phrases in this paragraph which seem to me most characteristic of Lady Martin's method. It may be that Ophelia felt pain, that her nature was particularly sensitive and delicate, that she felt degradation as well as anguish; but none of these things appear in the words which Shakespeare assigns to her, here or elsewhere. So far as the text is concerned, she seems to take Laertes' advice as a matter of course, and entirely in good part, while her half-playful retort shows no sign of wounded sensibilities. As to her "sensitiveness" and "delicacy" which would "shrink and quiver" at Polonius's platitudes, these, I think, are qualities of quite modern growth. Despite her songs in the fourth act, and her very composed reception of Hamlet's equivocal banter in the play-scene, I think it is wrong to conclude that Shakespeare intended Ophelia for a woman of specially *in*delicate mind; but to suppose that a woman living in her age (that is, at any time between 600 and 1600), and amid her surroundings, could be particularly "sensitive" and

"delicate" in Lady Martin's acceptation of the words, is to suppose nothing less than a miracle.* Finally, Lady Martin admits that the "feeling of degradation" lies *behind* the few words she utters. That is just my argument—it certainly does not lie on the face of them.

We have seen that Lady Martin will hear no word against the limpid truthfulness of Ophelia's character. When we come to the passage on which the accusation of untruthfulness is founded, that in which she consents to act as a plummet whereby the King and Polonius may sound the depths of Hamlet's madness, Lady Martin leads off with the assertion that this arrangement "must have been acutely painful to her fine nature." Perhaps so; but, if so, it is a pity that she does not utter a single word of protest or make the feeblest effort to be excused the acutely painful task. "When suddenly challenged, 'Where is your father?'" Lady Martin continues . . . . "what can she do but stammer out in reply, 'At home, my lord'? Shall she expose the old man, when thus called to answer for him, to the insults, the violence, of Hamlet's mad anger, which she fears would have fallen upon him had she told the truth? No; like Desdemona, she faces the falsehood, and, to screen her father, takes it upon her own soul . . . And yet I have seen Ophelia's answer brought forward as a proof of her weakness. . . . Such weakness I call *strength*, in the highest, most noble, because most self-forgetting, sense of the word." To compare Ophelia's little fib with the splendid falsehood of Desdemona's dying breath is certainly to compare small things with great. It is simply the half-involuntary subterfuge of a timid girl placed in difficult circumstances. It is the first phrase that rises to her lips, and no more a proof of essential weakness and falsity than of self-forgetting strength and truthfulness. No one who reads this scene unbiassed by the necessity of fitting Ophelia's conduct into a pre-conceived character-scheme, will see in her share in it anything specially noble or peculiarly ignoble. If she did not believe Hamlet to be mad, she would certainly be acting treacherously in drawing him out before eaves-droppers; but she is surely not to be blamed for helping his uncle and her father to

* Lady Martin will have it that many of Hamlet's jests and reproaches "must have passed harmless over the innocent head which did not know their meaning." What possible evidence have we of this?

estimate the nature and extent of what she and they believe to be his malady. Here, as elsewhere, she plays her little part in a stolidly dutiful fashion. She is her father's child and a good girl, in the narrow sense of the words. Only by industrious fantastication can anyone find in her either a high-minded heroine or lascivious minx. Her epitaph might be, "She spoke beautifully and acted dutifully."

Pass we now to Portia. In her case Lady Martin has no slanders to rebut, for everyone is agreed in admiring the Lady of Belmont. "I have always classed her," says Lady Martin, "with Vittoria Colonna, Cassandra Fedele, and women of that stamp,"—a remark to which no one can object save in so far as the confusion of fictitious with historical characters has proved an unfailing source of errors in criticism. Here we must again distinguish between the artist and the critic. It is quite natural that a cultivated actress, seeking to embody in her own person a great lady of the Italian Renaissance, should aid her imagination by studying the life and thoughts, the manners, costumes, and general idiosyncrasies of an actual great lady of the epoch. But even the actress should keep steadily in mind that the one is a reality, the other a phantasm; while the critic should do all in his power to get rid of all possible associations with Vittoria Colonna or any other person or persons whatsoever, until he has carefully examined the actual words set down by Shakespeare for Portia to speak, and gathered their plain, unmagnified, unvarnished import.

This habit of treating fictitious characters as actual personages lies at the root of half the pseudo-criticism of Shakespeare which burdens the world. Poe in his "Marginalia" (quoted by the author of a recent remarkable pamphlet on "The Upshot of 'Hamlet'" which has just reached me) puts the matter very clearly. "In all commentating upon Shakespeare," he says, "there has been a radical error never yet mentioned. It is the error of attempting to expound his characters—to account for their actions—to reconcile their inconsistencies—not as if they were the coinage of a human brain, but as if they had been actual existences upon earth. . . . . If Hamlet had really lived, and if the tragedy were an accurate record of his deeds, from this record (with some trouble) we might, it is true, reconcile his inconsistencies, and settle to our satisfaction his true character. But the task becomes the purest absurdity when we deal only with a phantom. It is not (then) the inconsistencies

of the acting man which we have as a subject of discussion . . . but the whims and vacillations, the conflicting energies and indolences of the poet. It seems to us little less than a miracle that this obvious point should have been overlooked." Think of it for a moment, and the truth of Poe's statement will appear evident. Most (not all) "commentating upon Shakespeare" during the present century has treated the sayings and doings of his creations as if they were so many facts recorded on unquestionable authority about real men who lived in the real world as solidly and unmythically as the Duke of Wellington or Dr. Johnson. In dealing with the problematic characters of history—with Francis Bacon, for instance, or Oliver Cromwell—we first try by all methods in our power to separate fiction from fact, to learn what they actually said and did; which done, we may or may not be able to harmonise all that we know of them, and render their characters conceivable and comprehensible, but at least we are sure that if we cannot do so, the fault lies in our lack of knowledge or of insight, and we cheerfully enlarge our notions of what is possible to human nature in accordance with these ascertained facts. But when we deal similarly with Shakespeare's creations—when, on coming to a seeming inconsistency, we first try to prove that the text is corrupt, and, failing that, cross our hands and say "Shakespeare knows best; if he says Hamlet said this and did that, it must be all right, and our experience of what is possible and probable in human nature must go to the wall"—we are guilty of a glaring fallacy. We are saying in effect, "Because Shakespeare was sometimes clairvoyant, he can never have been shortsighted; because he was a great poet, he was an infallible creator." We are attributing to him not only superhuman—literally miraculous—insight, but superhumam energy, industry, conscientiousness. This is what we are doing in talking of his men and women as real personages, whose every act and utterance might, had we the skill, been made to fit into one true and inevitable character-scheme, tallying with the objective facts of the case. There are no objective facts at all to be harmonised, or rather there is only one supreme fact with which the critic is concerned namely, the mind of the poet-actor-manager, William Shakespeare This mind we must try to reconstruct, partly deductively, by studying the intellectual conditions of the poet's age and nation, partly inductively, by examining the recorded facts of his life (meagre but vastly significant), and questioning the phantoms, to use Poe's

words, which he gave off in such vivid abundance. Light, no doubt, will generate light: when through the phantoms we know something of the mind, that knowledge in its turn will help us to a more accurate understanding of the phantoms, and so on in an indefinite series of reflections and re-reflections. But the first condition of sound criticism is that we should give up thinking of the phantoms as facts, and should remember that they are mere emanations of a human brain, abnormal indeed, but not supernatural. If we suppose that Shakespeare's mind was not subject to the same laws as our own, we may as well give up the attempt to understand him or his creations. Why should we set out with finite sounding-lines to fathom the infinite?

This parenthesis has led us away from Lady Martin's conception of Portia, but it is not really a digression; for the error it points out lies at the root of all such fantasies as those we are considering —fantasies, I repeat, which are natural and interesting as belonging to the mental processes of a great artist, but which, were they put forward as serious Shakespearean criticism, would exemplify some of the worst vices of an antiquated school.

Lady Martin sets to work in the first place to give Portia an education. Her "wise" father—for Lady Martin holds this eccentric testator to have been wise, and accepts the casket-lottery as a "good inspiration"—her wise father "has surrounded her with all that is beautiful in art and ennobling in study, and placed her in the society of scholars, poets, soldiers, statesmen, the picked and noblest minds of her own and other lands. Amid this throng of honoured guests, not the least honoured, we may be sure, was the learned cousin, Dr. Bellario. This cousin of hers we may suppose . . . to have been her instructor in jurisprudence—a not unfitting branch of the future heiress of Belmont's education. Her father may have seen with pleased surprise the bias of her mind towards such studies, and this, as well as her affection for her learned teacher, may have led him to take her to some of the famous trials of the day, so that when her own hour of trial comes, when heart and head must alike be strong, and her self-possession is taxed to the utmost, she knows at least the forms of the court, and through no technical ignorance would be likely to betray herself. If this were not so, how could she, however assured of her power to overcome the Jew, have dared to venture into the presence of that 'great court of Venice,' where any failure would have been disastrous, not merely to herself,

but to Bellario?" The whole of this passage, and especially the last sentence, is a fine example of reasoning about poetical figments as if they were historical facts. It can scarcely be necessary to point out that there is no evidence to support any one of these conjectures. Shakespeare clearly imagined Portia as a woman of bright intelligence and considerable accomplishments; when we go beyond this in conjuring up her past, our thoughts are our own, not his. She could scarcely sin against the forms of a court which had no forms, and did not even distinguish between judge and advocate. Her knowledge of jurisprudence extends to a paltry quibble utterly opposed to all rational principles of interpretation—a quirk which might have passed muster before a corrupt cadi in the "Arabian Nights," but to which no civilised court would listen for a moment. True, she cites a statute which the imbecile court seems to have utterly forgotten, as to the punishment of an alien who compasses the death of a citizen; but this reference has, doubtless, been supplied her by Bellario in the "notes" which he sent to meet her at the "traject." Lady Martin, I observe, supposes that Portia's original idea was to bring Bellario to Venice and place the case in his hands, and that she was only induced to appear herself on hearing of the illness of her learned cousin; but why, if this were so, should she determine from the first to assume male disguise, and why should she tell Balthazar to bring "notes and garments" from Bellario, and say nothing about bringing the doctor himself? A little consideration of the text will show that between the second and fourth scenes of the third act the idea of the quibble has occurred to her, that in the packet she sends by Balthazar she suggests the whole scheme to Bellario, probably enclosing a draft of the letter she wishes him to address to the Court, and that Bellario's illness is merely part of the elaborate joke played off upon that simple-minded tribunal. If this be so (and it can scarcely be otherwise, unless we suppose that Shakespeare forgot in act iv. what he had written in act iii., scene 4), what becomes of Portia's legal education, of her visits to the law courts, of her habit of looking "with a judicial mind upon serious matters"? The fact is, one needs but little skill in Gaius or Justinian to appear in courts of fantasy and administer fairy-tale law. Shakespeare, in "The Merchant of Venice," simply took two current legends of the Middle Ages (that he was not even the first to weld them together seems pretty clear from Gosson's allusion in 1579 to a play called "The Jew," representing "the greedinesse of

worldly chusers and bloody minds of usurers") and gave them immortal life at the touch of his genius; he did not trouble his head to rationalise them. Had he done so, he would have found it much more difficult to explain Bassanio's failure to recognise his newly-wedded wife than to account for Portia's very meagre knowledge of law.

"I could never leave my characters," says Lady Martin, "when the curtain fell and the audience departed. As I had lived with them through their early lives, so I also lived into their future." Accordingly she cannot believe that such a woman as Portia would leave the despised, deserted Jew to his fate. She imagines her presenting herself at his door, taking no denial, besieging him with kindness, teaching him "the happiness of bestowing forgiveness, and the blessed hope of being himself forgiven," and, in short, rendering effectual the formal conversion to Christianity upon which Antonio* had insisted as a condition of Shylock's pardon. These imaginings, like the rest, are interesting as illustrations of a distinguished artist's method of thinking out her characters; but as contributions to the serious study of Shakespeare they distort and obscure rather than illumine the matter in hand. I have dwelt long enough, however, on this distinction between the artist's point of view and the critic's. It is exemplified more or less in all Lady Martin's subsequent essays, though in none, perhaps, so clearly as in these opening ones. It only remains for me to crave forgiveness for having used Lady Martin's delightful book to point the moral of a "Fable for Critics." The actor who should approach his Shakespeare in a spirit of pure rationalism would find his powers paralysed by a hundred doubts and questionings; therefore Lady Martin's ingenious and womanly reflections need no excuse. But the critic stands on different ground. He must be a rationalist on pain of merely darkening counsel by words without wisdom. That is why such fantasies as come with the best grace in the world from Lady Martin strike us as mere reductions to absurdity of the craft of criticism when we find them in the works of——but why give names when their name is legion?

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* "We must at least believe," says Lady Martin, "that he did not put this indignity upon him in mere wantonness of spirit." Why must we believe so? It is surely not the first indignity Antonio has put upon Shylock in mere wantonness of spirit.

Helen Faucit.*

BY W. F. WALLER.

THE studies, in letter form, of those Shakespearean characters with the impersonation of which the name of Helen Faucit has been especially identified—"my heroines, for they were mine, a part of me"—have grown, Lady Martin tells us, one by one, under her hand, into the present volume. A volume to be written, and by one having authority, and not as write the scribes. So written, a charming volume, wherein psychology, somewhat apt to run into what Mr. Browning calls the *fantasque*, is tempered with minor-key detail, historic, biographic, anecdotic, quite naïve, quite feminine, but quite delightful; with the result that her stage-story who was

> "the sweetest,
> Fairest, gentlest, and completest
> Shakespeare's lady ever poet
> Longed for,

whereof by parcels this generation has something heard, can now be read intentively.

It opens almost with the opening of the "lonely, little-cared-for life" of a child so fragile-looking as to escape school-days for a while, who sits for long happy hours in strange company on the Margate beach—with Juliet and John Bunyan, Sharazád and Satan; with the first, perhaps, and the last, for choice, for she gets to know them both by heart, and will declaim the Council Speech of the Prince of Darkness to the waves, and the Balcony Scene to the "great, kind dog of the house," in charge, as only a born actress would have dared to do.

The born actress, though, has to grow, and does grow out of other things besides her fragility; wins a prize for recitation, to be sure, but mounts a donkey, now, occasion offering. By-and-by, she and sister Harriet meet one sultry summer's day, on Richmond Green, a certain "small, pale man with a fur cap, and wrapped in a fur cloak. He looked to me as if come from the grave. A stray lock of very dark hair crossed his forehead, under which shone eyes

* "On some of Shakespeare's Female Characters." By Helena Faucit (Lady Martin). Blackwood, 1885."

which looked dark, and yet bright as lamps" . . . a man with a voice that "seemed to come from so far away—a long, long way behind him." Those wondrous eyes the child was never to see, that distant voice never to hear, again; but before they parted "the kind hand was withdrawn which had lain in mine so heavily, and yet looked so thin and small." It was put upon the child's head, and Edmund Kean bade her God-speed. Confirmation by the great Hierophant of her art, this laying-on of hands reads like. Who knows? Mr. Kean was within measurable distance of his undertaker that afternoon, and, in due course, was "well in The grave his dwelling" concerning which he had crooned to his young friend, rhyming from the old ballad with her name of Helen in it. And yet it may have been his vanished hand that marshalled the girl the way that she was going. Through the stage-door of Mr. Kean's old theatre on the Green, to wit, on to the stage, deserted after rehearsal, where a Balcony Scene was ready set, as though expectant of her. There, with sister Harriet for her Romeo, to play Juliet to a more appreciative audience, this time, than the big dog —to a manager, no less, Mr. Kean's successor—a remarkable manager, who knew the real thing when he saw it. To find herself, in consequence, one memorable night, in the parlour that had been Mr. Kean's dressing-room, where relics of the Hierophant were preserved under glass, waiting, a Juliet of Juliet's own age, for her call to "go on" in earnest, "almost believing that his spirit was there, in sympathy with mine."

How the *débutante* prepared herself for her ordeal—an old-fashioned method of preparation for ordeal it was, quite unknown I fancy, and, in either case, about the last to commend itself, to the *débutante* of to-day; how the sight of "the dear friend of all my youth" amongst the audience conquered the child's paralysing stage-fright, and carried her on swimmingly to her fourth act; how, when the time came to drink the potion, of potion there was none for the novice's desperate hands had crushed the glass into the tender palms, and there was blood flowing in a little stream over the pretty new white satin frock with its "dignity" of small train; how, thereat, Juliet fainted in sick reality on the bed, and the subsequent proceedings became rather blurred in her remembrance; how—"oh, my dress! my first waking thought"—how she was inconsolable till told that the injured "breadth" could be renewed; all this the heroine of that night herself must tell.

She was the heroine of other nights on that little stage, with the result that "the Master" whom she wished to please was "disappointed." He feared, forsooth! she was not "in" her character. She must have been, in fact, but too much in it—a way your born actress has, at first. But then, Miss Faucit, aged fourteen, had no notion, fortunately, that she was an actress born. Lady Martin, even now, writes of that "frolic rehearsal" as the turning-point of her life, the which, except in the most limited sense, it surely was not. No one, as, by-and-by, another Helen told her—"no one can be more wise than Destiny." And the little maid whom Edmund Kean called to him was predestinate to other things than the chronicling of smallbeer, or ever—not without some knowledge that this was so, mayhap—the great actor laid his hand upon her head, and bade her that God-speed.

However, besides not being "in" her character, she was too young. On the latter point they were right enough. Three years later even, and more, the girl was too young for the work they put upon her, season after season, on that cruel stage of "the Garden." She broke down under it again and again; and if William Charles Macready did not lose his leading lady altogether, it was not at all the fault of that most unconscionable of taskmasters. He, though, was chafing just now under the taskmastership of Mr. Bunn, over the way, and it was Charles Kemble who, hidden somewhere in the dark "front" of Covent Garden, watched Miss Faucit's rehearsals of her old part. Three years had no doubt enlarged her conception of other things besides Juliet; one thing it could hardly have entered into her mind to conceive—the adoption of any other line of life than this. Mr. Kemble—"how sympathetic, and courteous, and encouraging he was!"—promptly opened the way to this life. The gallantest of Mercutios was, he said, making his final bow to his art, as this Juliet her first curtsey; but he was to have played his famous *rôle* on the momentous occasion, if rehearsals had not made it clear that the stock Romeo was, as Lady Martin puts it, "of too mature an age to act with so young a Juliet when she came before an audience on her *début*." Mr. Bennett, in point of fact, though an excellent actor in his way, was handicapped with the disadvantages which militated against the appearance of Mr. Tupman in the costume of a brigand. So, for this, and perhaps for other reasons, "The Hunchback" was put into the bill at the eleventh hour, and the *débutante* had to forego Juliet, and appear as Julia.

She was almost heart-broken, and no wonder. For she *was* Juliet, whereas, neither then nor thereafter, popular as the impersonation got to be with her audiences, did she ever feel herself to be that impossible Julia. And, artist-like, she felt that that night was to make her or undo her quite.

Those were awful moments for her whilst she waited with her Helen at the wing for their cue to enter. Luckily, in that Miss Taylor who was the Mrs. Walter Lacy of after-times, she found a Helen of a hundred, "who comforted and supported me with all her might, and with all the fine tact of a sympathetic heart. . . . With sympathetic tears in her own eyes, she begged me not to let those big tears fall so continuously and spoil my pretty cheeks; and when the terrible moment came for our entrance, she put her arm round my waist, and propelled me forward, whispering to me 'to curtsey to the applause—again! again!' when, but for her help, I could hardly stand."

After the first act, they came round her—the "mature" Bennett, the Master Walter, Kemble, the Clifford, Osbaldiston, Manager and Modus—and would fain have assured her that all was right; the Julia's "very watery smile" the while expressive of a contrary opinion. So the second act—her subsequent playing of which, Charles Kemble told her, stamped her as the Beatrice for his Benedick—began not well, perhaps, and certainly might have ended badly, but that—the how and why is prettily explained—"again a face saved me." The line

"I'll shine, be sure I will!"

proved prophetic; after that, there was no such word as fail. Osbaldiston was proposing an engagement, at the end of the next act, for three years, "which, as I was much under age, was signed for me the next morning, and attached me to the theatre for that period as the leading actress." Leading lady at Covent Garden at seventeen, and at "the highest salary ever given in those days"—it was not a bad beginning. Of course, she had not a little of the *technique* of her art to learn. But then, she played for two seasons—until his farewell night, indeed—played Belvidera, Mrs. Haller, Juliet, Lady Townley (she must have been as little like Sir John's "racketing, rantipole" as ever was Fanny Kemble), Mrs. Beverley the Lady Constance, Desdemona, Beatrice—*que sais-je?*—with Charles Kemble; and that, for a clever girl, was a liberal stage-education. Besides, for all her quite right and proper nervousness

at times, she was surely to the manner born. She was still a "novice" of barely a month's standing when she was given to study a new part she was to "create"—the Lady Margaret of lugubrious Miss Baillie's "Separation." I daresay the authoress journeyed down from Hampstead to be present at her *première*. If she did, she might have seen a remarkable thing—Miss Faucit, the novice, pulling Charles Kemble, the veteran, through his part, in which, it being new to him, and he being deaf, and the prompter all in vain, Mr. Kemble would, but for the assistance of "his little friend," have "corpsed" more than once in the course of the evening. If Miss Baillie did not notice his circumstance, the grateful and gallant Charles took care that all the green-room should hear him marvelling at the novice's self-command, next day.

This same "Separation" is a dreadful thing to read, but it "took," somehow, it seems. The Lady Margaret may have had that to answer for. She was so popular in the character that she once saw, Lady Martin recounts, at the doll-stall in the Soho Bazaar—"a not-forgotten spot of interest"—a doll labelled "Miss Helen Faucit as Lady Margaret." This, it appears, was an unusual form of homage then, "and I felt just a little—not proud, but happy." Leading lady though she was, she would "have liked to buy that doll." But—she had a little drop of Quaker blood in her—"it might have looked like vanity." There were other reasons against the purchase, too; which go to show how carefully a leading lady on top salary was taken care of in those days, the article of finance not excepted.

However, I imagine, she forgot her disappointment anent the doll, though Lady Martin's memory still seems to hold it in sad and fond regret, when she came to play her beloved Juliet once more; for, the age and avoirdupois of Mr. Bennett notwithstanding, it was in that character that she followed up her success in "The Separation." It should have made success confirmed and crowned. Of all the characters she has touched upon in this book, Lady Martin has given us at length—albeit never at length too long—her notion and conception worked out in detail. More clearly, though, than all, has she set Juliet before us. This has, of them all, been the labour of most love, furnished and finished with all those intimate touches which make a portrait perfect. One understands now why to think of Helen Faucit is straightway to see the Verona girl, and not straightway to see the Beatrice, or the Rosalind, when one reads of what used to take place while the dog basked and blinked

resignedly in the seaside sun; of how the school-girl—she ought by the way, to have been more healthily treated in the matter of those donkey-rides—discovered the tomb of all the Capulets at the bottom of those slimy, toad-haunted steps in Lee churchyard, and realised, enforcedly from the outside, all "the horror of the vault"; of how time, and the man—he deserves to have his name immortalised: it was Willis Jones—and, above all, the part, brought this Veronese *en herbe* upon the stage. I think it had very much to do with keeping her there; certainly, to the stage it brought her back, when Helen Faucit had been wooed, and married, and a', to play it, interwoven as it had got to be with many memories, very tender, and, some of them, very sad, yet again, for us. A "part of me," indeed!

Between the Richmond night and that first night at Covent Garden, the player's conception of the part had naturally altered with her more perfect conception of the play. In the interval, "I had been allowed to see the real Shakespeare," and the light which the opaque acting-edition had hitherto hindered had broken in upon her. The play was henceforth, not merely the most beautiful of love-stories; in it were also the elements of Sophoclean tragedy. The lovers die, indeed, when "their whole life's love goes down in a day;" but their death is the scourge the offended gods lay upon their fathers' hate:—

> "Their misadventured, piteous overthrows,
> Do, with their death, bury their parents' strife."

The heroine of such a play had, of course, to be wrought out on very different lines from those which are indicated in the case of the young person in the acting-edition. The representation of such a heroine, naturally and inevitably as it must have fallen short of the conception when Helen Faucit first gave it on that memorable 10th of March, must have been as new to the English stage then as it would be in this our day, when the play seems to have become the peculiar property of the exponent of lachrymose or vixenish Villikins-and-his-Dinah-ism, foreign and domestic.

It met with much laudatory, and some spiteful, criticism at home, this Juliet of 1836. I think it had to go to Paris to be thoroughly appreciated; at least, I read no such keen, appreciative criticism elsewhere as Edouard Thiérry penned thereon. This was nine years later. It was years later still when the great desire of a young but enthusiastic playgoer was gratified at last, and he too saw Juliet.

The Sophoclean side of the conception was outwards, that night. I was told it oftenest was, then. Well, Macready *avait passé par là*, for one thing. Yet, Juliet has always remained with me so—just as she was that night.

This same William Charles Macready—he had a good deal to do—a good deal too much to do, some think, who think it was not all good he did—with the after stage life of the actress who played with him for the first time one night in the May of her life and of her first season. During that season, and the next, Kemble was there, and, no doubt, was a wholesome prophylactic. But, on the whole, it would have been as well, perhaps, if that historic row between Bunn and Macready, which brought the latter and Kemble's "little friend" together on the boards at Covent Garden, could have been postponed for a few years, for from that time till Macready left England for America the two were continuously playfellows, and, as Lady Martin says, "it was impossible for a very young, very sensitive, self-distrustful girl to act by Macready's side without being influenced by his intense earnestness and power." Four or five years of this influence, and what was the consequence? "Miss Faucit s'abandonne au talent de Macready, comme si ce talent était sa propre gloire," wrote Thierry. "I was accused of having caught his manner and expression," Lady Martin declares, and most singularly is this accusation borne out on the beautiful face in the third portrait in this book.

All this was very dangerous. The individual Helen Faucit might have been Macreadyated altogether if this had gone on much longer. I think, though, that Miss Faucit had rather more will of her own than perhaps Lady Martin gives her credit for. She must have been the Portia she chose to be; she certainly was the Lady Macbeth, with that sigh in the sleeping scene that made her manager marvel where in wickedness she could have found it. And it was surely her Desdemona, and not Mr. Macready's, which brought back the balance to the play by being "so hard to kill."

I think this Othello would never have killed this Desdemona quite; but I think, too, that the day they parted was a good day for her and for us, for to that parting we owe the Helen Faucit we have seen, and, may be, too, these pages that are so good to read and so hard to close. But for the present here and now the inexorable laws of space must cry us halt.

Florentine Theatres.

BY CHARLES HERVEY.

WHEN I first visited the Tuscan capital towards the end of 1837, the temporary *prima donna* of the leading theatre the Pergola, was Virginia Blasis, a singer of considerable repute in Italy, but whose previous essays in Paris and London had been only moderately successful. She was tall and dark-complexioned, and possessor of a voice more remarkable for power and extent than for sweetness of tone ; her principal defect was a cold and passionless kind of singing, to which even the most dramatic finale failed to impart the slightest semblance of animation. Nevertheless, she drew good houses in Bellini's "Beatrice di Tenda," excellently seconded by that most sympathetic tenor, Napoleone Moriani, and was on the point of appearing in a new character when, having imprudently exposed herself to that scourge of Florence, the "tramontana," she was suddenly attacked by a bronchial malady, which terminated fatally on May 12, 1838. Her many amiable qualities had rendered her a general favourite, and her funeral was celebrated with great pomp in the church of Santa Croce, where a monument to her memory by the sculptor, Pampaloni, in the shape of a tomb on which she is represented kneeling, was erected by public subscription. It is hardly necessary to add that for some days after her decease the lottery offices were besieged by innumerable speculators, each of whom had consulted the "Book of Dreams," and selected the numbers answering to the words "death," "singer," and "tramontana" ; but as not one of these happened to come up, their holders consoled themselves for their ill luck as best they might, and the Government netted a considerable sum.

The brother of this estimable lady, Carlo Blasis, dancer and ballet-master, was an enthusiastic votary of the Terpsichorean art, and published a variety of treatises exclusively relating to his favourite speciality, one of which, "Notes upon Dancing," appeared in London in 1820. Some of the principles laid down by him are

curious and worth quoting. "The dancer," he says, "must be always practising; otherwise he is in danger of losing what he has acquired. He must follow neither simple, unpractised theorists, nor the imaginary schemes of innovating speculators. He must be temperate and sober, must partially renounce every pleasure but that which Terpsichore affords; must not think of horsemanship, fencing or running; must study the antique, drawing and music, but particularly his own limbs; and if he aspire to the composition of ballets, must have a profound knowledge of the drama and of human nature."

The successor of Virginia Blasis at the Pergola was Carolina Ungher, a far superior artist in every respect, and unquestionably one of the first dramatic singers of her time. She had a pleasing and intelligent, though not strictly handsome, face, and a slight but well-proportioned figure; her voice, a trifle shrill in the upper notes, was remarkable both for extent and flexibility, and her intonation was perfectly distinct and clear. As an actress I have rarely beheld her equal, and certainly never on the operatic stage; the part chosen for her *début* was Lucrezia Borgia, and although I have since seen no less than ten other representatives of Donizetti's terrible heroine, none of them, not even Giulia Grisi, so completely realised my idea of Ferrara's implacable duchess. Moriani was the Gennaro, and Coselli the Duke; forming, together with a very attractive Maffio Orsini, an *ensemble* such as has been seldom witnessed on the Italian boards.

Carolina Ungher was singularly diffident as to her own ability, and, when starring some years later at Dresden as Desdemona in "Otello," told the actor Genast that she had never been able to account for the favour displayed towards her by the public; "for," she said, "my voice is not a good one, and what success I have obtained is entirely due to incessant practice and application." Rossini was evidently of a different opinion, for, speaking of her to Donizetti, he enthusiastically declared that she possessed "the fire of the South, the energy of the North, a chest of bronze, a voice of silver, and a talent of gold." She subsequently married a Frenchman of the name of Sabatier, and after quitting the stage passed her remaining days in a villa near Florence, where she died on March 23, 1877, in her seventy-second year.

One thing particularly struck me at the Pergola, namely, the little attention given to the performance by the lady portion of the

audience ; at first sight, half the boxes seemed to be empty, their occupants sitting in a kind of ante-room at the back, which they used as a drawing-room for the reception of their friends. Now and then, when the orchestra announced a favourite air, such as "Di pescator" or "Il segreto," they came forward and listened, but at the conclusion retired again into semi-obscurity, and resumed their conversation as before. An opera box in Italy is, in fact, a *salon* where visits are paid and received three times a week ; and the same opera frequently enjoying a run of two or three months, people know it by heart, and regard the theatre merely as a social *rendezvous*, where everyone, when not otherwise engaged, is in the habit of putting in an appearance for at least an hour or two in the course of the evening.

At the Cocomero—pronounced by the aspirate-loving natives Hohomero—I saw one of the best Italian comedians, Luigi Vestri, in a version of "Pauvre Jacques," familiar to Londoners of that period as "Monsieur Jacques," the title-rôle in which was admirably sustained by Morris Barnett. Vestri was then approaching the close of his career, and his utterance was somewhat indistinct ; but the simple pathos displayed by him in the part of the old musician was singularly impressive, and reminded me more than once of its original representative, Bouffé. Of the Teatro Alfieri, usually devoted to classic drama, I have little to say ; all I can possibly call to mind being a dull and poorly acted tragedy by Niccolini, of which I have forgotten the name.

The little theatre of the Borgo Ognissanti, as I remember it, was a very dingy locality, frequented mainly by the lower classes of the population, and entirely depending for its success on the humorous vagaries of that—to anyone but a Florentine—unintelligible personage, Stenterello. This curious type, in some respects resembling the Roman Pasquin, but more genial and less addicted to political allusions, was the delight of those modest playgoers who could muster a few *quattrini* wherewith to secure a seat in as uncomfortable a theatre as architect ever designed. Stenterello was a species of episodical character introduced in every piece, and, generally speaking, having nothing whatever to do with the plot ; his witticisms, couched in the local dialect, were invariably hailed with roars of laughter, and mostly referred to the current topics of the day. My scanty knowledge of Italian being limited to the ordinary language of civilised society, I was utterly unable to com-

prehend a word he said ; and followed the example of old Valabrègue (Catalani's husband), who, sitting near me one evening, and understanding no more than I did, consolingly remarked, "Il n'y a qu'une chose à faire ; il faut hurler avec les loups, et rire de confiance!"

In addition to the above-mentioned theatres, Florence at that time possessed an admirable amateur company, whose performances took place at the Casa Standish, the residence of Prince Poniatowski ; and were almost exclusively supported by the members of his family. They consisted of light operas, got up with every attention to appropriate scenery and costume, and sung in a style that would have done credit to a first-rate professional corps. I heard there the "Barbiere" and the "Elisir d'Amore," in which the Princess Elise Poniatowski was successively a charming Rosina and Adina ; her brothers Charles and Joseph (the latter subsequently a well-known operatic composer and senator at the court of Napoleon the Third) undertaking the bass and baritone parts, and a singing master named Giuliani the tenors. Invitations to these delightful *soirées* were eagerly sought for, and the audience on each occasion included the *élite* of Florentine society, the Prince de Montfort (Jérome Bonaparte) and his daughter, the Princess Mathilde, being invariably present. The days of Lord Normanby's famous amateurs, among whom Charles Matthews so conspicuously shone, had not yet arrived ; but I may be permitted to doubt if in general excellence and perfection of detail even they surpassed their predecessors of the Casa Standish.

I naturally profited by the first opportunity that presented itself of making the acquaintance of Madame Catalani, and have a pleasant recollection of her kindness and hospitality. She received her friends on certain evenings of the week, was extremely partial to the English, and occasionally complied with the solicitations of her visitors by taking her seat at the piano and singing a few bars of a favourite air ; never omitting, when any of our countrymen were among the guests, to conclude with a verse of "God save the Queen." Twelve years later, she accompanied her daughter, Madame Deslandes, to Paris, while the cholera was raging there ; and shortly after her arrival succumbed to that appalling malady, June 13, 1849.

In Lumley's "Reminiscences of the Opera" it is stated, on the authority of the banker French, that she fell in love with M. de

Valabrègue from seeing him in the pit during one of her performances. Whether this be correct or not I am unable to say; when I knew her husband, he was certainly no longer an Adonis, but a wiry little man with grey hair, extremely active in his movements, and passionately devoted to billiards. We used often to play together at the Casino de' Nobili, and I remember that one afternoon, when our game had lasted beyond the usual time, he looked at his watch, and told me he must be on his way homewards, or he would be late for dinner.

"Dinner!" said I. "You surely can't be thinking of dining yet; it is only half-past four."

"Que voulez-vous?" he replied. "My wife has never got over her old habits, and, if she had her own way, would on no account dine later than four. Now, I prefer six, and as we couldn't agree about it, we thought it best to split the difference and dine at five, which," he added with a comical shrug of the shoulders, "suits neither of us!"

Mention has been made of Mr. French (of the firm of Plowden and French), a banker much esteemed for his social qualities, both by natives and foreigners. He married the daughter of the composer Mazzinghi, and was himself a good musician, possessing, moreover, a very agreeable voice, and singing "Love's young dream" and other Irish melodies with exquisite taste and sweetness. The old road to Fiesole being exceedingly steep and inconvenient for traffic, he and another generously-disposed individual supplied the necessary funds for the construction of a new one, in return for which both parties were ennobled by the Grand Duke. This act of liberality on the part of the two colleagues, and the recompense obtained by them, were commemorated many years ago in the following lines:—

"So strangers may, whenever they
The new road gaze from far on,
Say, Half this mount has made a Count,
The other half a Baron."

Our Musical-Box.

"LAKMÉ."

Opera, in three Acts, by MM. Gondinet and Gille; music by Leo Delibes. Produced, for the first time in England, at the Gaiety Theatre, on June 6, 1885.

Lakmé	Miss M. Van Zandt.	Frédéric	M. Soulacroix.
Mallika	Mdlle. Hamann.	Nilakantha	M. Carroul.
Gérald	M. Dupuy.		

M. Leo Délibes has composed the prettiest ballet music of modern times, and has thereby earned a high degree of popularity throughout the continent of Europe. "Sylvia" and "Coppelia" are as well known and keenly appreciated in Vienna, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and the leading cities of Italy as in Paris; the latter ballet, considerably abridged from its pristine dimensions, was brought out at the Empire Theatre, in Leicester Square, some months ago, and, although heavily handicapped by its association in the evening's entertainment with a curiously feeble, not to say drivelling, English operetta, drew a good many fair houses and gave real pleasure to a great number of music lovers. It is not too much to say that M. Délibes is a creative genius, as far as dance music is concerned, by which I would not be understood to mean mere quadrilles, polkas and waltzes such as ball-room society loveth, but music lending itself to the graceful curvettings of skilled *ballerine*, as well as to the dramatic or romantic situations which those supple young persons endeavour to describe to us in "the poetry of motion." But it appears to me that M. Délibes' faculty as a musical composer—a very genial and charming one, to be sure—is limited to the production of works of the class above referred to; and that when he attempts to write opera he practically illustrates, and in by no means an agreeable manner, the old figurative incongruity of the round peg in the square hole and *vice-versâ*. About ten years ago I heard his comic opera, "Le Roi l'a dit," very well performed at Berlin—Minnie Hauk sustained the leading female part, and both sang and acted admirably—and came to the conclusion that, despite the prettiness of some of the music and the daintiness of the orchestration, it was too intrinsically trivial to attract the London public for a remunerative length of time—that is to say, from a managerial point of view; plainly speaking, that it would not pay the expenses incurred in putting it upon the stage. It seemed to me at once "thin" and frivolous—intensely French in style and treatment, which characteristic, however, judging by the conspicuous success of "Mignon" and "Manon" in this country, does not appear to be a drawback—and strangely lacking in that seemingly spontaneous flow of catching tunefulness that runs through its composer's ballet music.

"Lakmé" impresses me as being afflicted by the same faults, or rather,

shortcomings, as those which disqualify "Le Roi l'a dit" from ever attaining popularity in England. It is trivial; it is wanting in invention; it rarely rises above the level of mediocrity; in it ingenuity of contrivance stands in the stead of originality of thought; and, worst of all, it is dull. We are told that it was expressly composed to suit the particular singer who created the title *rôle*; and this may very well have been the case, for "Lakmé" is essentially what the Germans term a *Mach-Werk*, or laboriously manufactured article, to the fabrication of which its maker has addressed himself for the achievement of some business end, unprompted by any poetical or artistic inspiration. Besides, it is manifestly intended by M. Délibes to be what is technically called a "one-part piece." To his heroine he has afforded abundant opportunity for display in the sentimental as well as *fioriture* line of vocalisation; whereas his other characters are but poorly off for chances to distinguish themselves as singers, and, indeed, are mere satellites, revolving more or less slowly round the planet from which they derive their *raison d'être*.

The plot of "Lakmé" is one far better calculated to entertain a French than an English audience. Being framed upon current Parisian theories in connection with our methods of ruling and administering our possessions in India, it naturally teems with quaint misapprehensions and incongruities, sufficiently apparent to deprive the action of any seeming of verisimilitude. Lamké is the young and lovely daughter of a Brahminical priest, whose sacred person and sublime religion are chronic objects of derision to two young British officers, much to his annoyance. Nilakantha, the Brahmin in question, indulges in a good deal of strong language about the English generally, whom he apostrophises as "noisome conquerors," destined at some not distant date to succumb to the wrath of Brahma. The chief person of the Buddhist Trinity, according to Messrs Gondinet and Gille, is an exceptionally choleric and vengeful deity. I should like to hear what Mr. Edwin Arnold has to say with respect to this view of the supreme Indian god. One of the officers commits a trespass within the precincts of Nilakantha's temple, sees the latter's daughter, and becomes enamoured of her. She reciprocates his passion, and the lovers, as might be expected, get into no end of trouble. Gérald (the tenor) is stalked with partial success by Lakmé's father and a select body of cut throats in the pay of that ill-conditioned fanatic. His brother-officer, Frédéric, continually bores him with good advice, which Gérald steadfastly disregards; and but for the part he (Frédéric) sustains here and there in the concerted music, this character might be defined as a well-meaning but somewhat tiresome superfluity. In fact, such interest as there is in the opera is entirely monopolised by Lakmé, who is frequently sympathetic; as, for instance, in the genesis and development of her attachment to the "foreign oppressor"; in her agony when coerced by her unpleasant parent into taking an active part in a plot for her lover's destruction; in her despair when Gérald, with characteristic English perfidy, exhibits a disposition to get rid of her, although he has heretofore made hot love to her, and she has just saved his life; and, finally, when she adopts

the tragical resolve to die, as she cannot be his. Lakmé is a tender-hearted, faithful, self-sacrificing girl, to whom, moreover, M. Délibes has allotted the prettiest and least insignificant numbers of his opera, of which she therefore constitutes the most agreeable feature. No human interest can be attached to any of the other characters; nor is the music with which they are entrusted sufficiently remarkable to merit either praise or condemnation. Nobody but a Frenchman, I should incline to believe, having heard it once, would ever wish to hear it again. That has been the verdict pronounced upon it by every English musician, without a single exception, whose opinion I have solicited with respect to the merits of the work in question.

Miss Van Zandt's impersonation of the Brahmin's daughter is undoubtedly a clever one—restless, tricky, and self-sufficient, but conspicuously intelligent. The American lady is too much addicted to expressing emotion by the contrivance known as "making faces"; but to a person who is young and not ill-looking a little superfluous grimacing may be forgiven. Miss Van Zandt is an accomplished vocalist, and makes the most of a thin, reedy organ, not altogether devoid of sweetness of quality in the mezza-voce production, but somewhat harsh and shaky when she overstrains it. Her intonation is irreproachable, and she has attained quite exceptional proficiency in what the Germans call "Coloratur" and we very inadequately express by the word "execution." On the whole the effect produced by her singing in a small theatre is decidedly pleasurable, and there appears to be the making of a tolerable actress in her. When experience shall have ripened her talents and abated her self-consciousness, she will doubtless learn the expediency of refraining from ogling her audience in mute but fascinating solicitation for their favourable suffrages, when she ought to be absorbed in the business of her part. Miss Van Zandt, I have heard, is only twenty-four years old; she has, therefore, plenty of time before her wherein to correct certain faults of style and rid herself of sundry absurdities of manner which at present blemish her performance. It is to be hoped that she will have the good sense to make a steadfast effort in the direction of merging her individuality in her art; for she really is an excellent singer, and, above all, a brilliant illustrator of a school of vocalisation which, I regret to say, is all but extinct. After Madame Adelina Patti and Madame Scalchi, Miss Van Zandt is, perhaps, the neatest executant of florid passages now upon the lyric stage. To grand opera her voice and dramatic instincts alike are unsuitable; in comic opera she ought to rise to the very top of the tree, and most probably will do so.

The remaining characters in "Lakmé" were by no means badly sung or acted at the Gaiety Theatre; but what they had to do was so uninteresting, musically and dramatically, that I shall not trouble the readers of The Theatre with any comments upon it. The opera was fairly mounted and set, and the orchestra performed its appointed task with satisfactory efficiency.

The death of Sir Julius Benedict leaves a blank in English musical circles that will not readily be filled up. Throughout half-a-century this industrious artist and most kindly, amiable gentleman had played a part of no small importance and distinction in London and provincial society, and had been identified in the public mind with nearly every musical development and event of serious moment that had accrued within the limits of that period, during which he did as much as, if not more than, any of his professional contemporaries to spread throughout all classes of his adopted fellow-countrymen a taste for the musical art, and to promote its cultivation. As a composer Benedict laid no claim to the possession of paramount original genius; he appraised his own creative capacities accurately enough, and was content to be reckoned amongst the musicians of his day who strove to satisfy current requirements, and to give the public the very best work that it was in them to produce. But, if he did not invent anything strikingly novel or supremely beautiful, he was a consummate musician, teeming with erudition, and of a perfectly sound judgment; an admirable pianist, and unequalled accompanyist; a firm and spirited conductor; fertile in sweet and pleasant musical notions; a careful and indefatigable teacher; knowing exactly what playing and singing ought to be, and conscientiously earnest in his endeavour to communicate that knowledge to his pupils, and induce them to act upon it. So much for his professional capacities and functions. His private character was so full of beauty and grace that no man of delicate sensibility and artistic temperament could know him without loving him. Up to the close of his long and eventful life he displayed a spiritual youthfulness that, to me and many of his more intimate friends, was irresistibly fascinating. His spirits were always high; but they found expression in a fine, genial cheerfulness of address, equally free from formality and boisterousness. Indeed, Benedict's manners were those of a high-bred gentleman rather than of a struggling artist; I say "struggling" advisedly, for his whole career, prosperous as it doubtless was for many years, was one long, unremitting struggle to achieve an independence which slipped through his fingers again and again, just as he thought he had laid a firm hold upon it. With respect to business considerations, his character revealed curious combinations of shrewdness and simplicity. No professional man of his day collected his earnings more carefully, or controlled his expenditure with a more judicious thrift than he; but he was an easy prey to reckless or unprincipled *entrepreneurs*, in whose speculative undertakings he could be readily induced to invest his savings. On one occasion, I regret to say, he did so to the extent of six thousand pounds, which were swept away into a bottomless gulf of liabilities incurred by his partner for the time being, and vanished as though they had never been. From this blow, as Benedict has frequently assured me, his finances never rallied. He was stricken by it when already an old man, and his utmost efforts to replace the sum thus dissipated by sheer industry proved unavailing.

Sir Julius Benedict was one of the hardest workers I ever knew. Nothing came amiss to him; composing, conducting, teaching, book-writing, social duties and obligations occupied his waking hours day after day, year in year out, and, until very lately, he seemed absolutely insensible to fatigue. Only a few weeks before the commencement of his last illness I met him at a house-dinner of the Savage Club. He had conducted an oratorio at Manchester during the previous evening; had travelled all night to London; had changed his clothes, breakfasted, and given lessons from ten a.m. to five p.m. He made a hearty dinner, and when the smoking set in—despite the heat of the room and the reek of the tobacco, which he never really liked—he accompanied Messrs. Walsham and Deane Brand in one of his own vocal duets, and subsequently played his intricate variations upon "Where the Bee Sucks," with admirable *verve* and correctness. This was an amazing feat for a man well advanced in his eighty-first year. Ten days later I was his guest at "Our Club." He was in the chair, and in the course of the evening made a speech of considerable length, replete with amusing anecdote and sprightly "points" —delivered, moreover, without a break, and in a clear, firm voice, perfectly audible to everyone present. I never met him again after that merry evening, throughout which he was the life and soul of a gay party, entirely composed of men well skilled in conversational fence. The *convives* gathered together on that occasion are not likely to forget the lively sallies of their president—a veteran, who had been Weber's favourite pupil, had conversed with Beethoven, and had, if I remember aright, filled the important post of P. F. conductor in the orchestra of San Carlo at Naples in the year 1822!

My personal acquaintance with Benedict dates from a period of my life little less than forty years ago, which was exceptionally fruitful in events casually connecting me with celebrated musicians, one and all of whom I have to thank for many kindnesses and much timely encouragement to a sensitive and intensely ambitious musical child. It was about that time that I was presented and "shown off" as a precocious pianist to Mendelssohn, Sterndale Bennett, Cipriani Potter, George Smart, and Julius Benedict. To the last of these eminent *maestri*, in particular, I have been indebted, ever since I first knew him, for countless marks of good will. Busy as he always was from early morning till late at night, he never lacked time to perform a goodnatured action, or to do a good turn to a friend. Of his hospitality, which was alike tasteful and generous, I have partaken I know not how many times. In such minor duties of life as keeping appointments and answering letters he was the most exemplary of over-worked men. The natural sweetness of his temper was never, within my experience of him, soured for a moment by worry, disappointment, and vexation, of which he had far more than his fair share. Not less imperturbable was his courtesy, which won him friends innumerable of the gentler sex. The soft answer that turneth away wrath rose unbidden to his lips when cantankerous or overbearing persons tried to browbeat or quarrel with him. The sweet young wife of his green old

age was as entirely in love with and devoted to him as though he had been her equal in years and as comely as Antinoüs. It must have been a singularly fascinating individuality that, having survived three-quarters of a century, could win a gifted girl's heart and keep it to the day of his death. This, however, was one of the septuagenarian Benedict's many genial feats, revealing the intrinsic loveableness of his nature and the juvenility of temperament which he retained until the very eve of the illness that at last took him from us. As one who entertained a sincere affection for him, I crave permission to record in this place my profound sorrow for his death, which has saddened many thousands of English men and women, and my deep sympathy with his widow in her grievous affliction.

Great disappointment was inflicted on a large number of fashionable music-lovers, who arrived at the portals of Covent Garden Theatre on the evening of June 16, expectant of hearing the greatest living *cantatrice* sing in her favourite part of Violetta, by the announcement that Madame Patti was too ill to leave her bed, and that the performance had, therefore, been postponed to the following Saturday. Oddly enough, very few of the persons thus baulked of their anticipated treat went on to the Gaiety, hard by, to hear Miss Van Zandt in "Mignon." They did not, however, lose much by their lack of enterprise; for the young lady, quite contrary to her custom, sang painfully out of tune, being manifestly "off colour." Madame Patti had caught a chill by driving, early on a cold, damp morning, all the way from Craig-y-Nos to Swansea, whence she travelled all day long by rail to London. It was an imprudent thing to do, and she suffered severely for it, besides putting hundreds of her admirers to great inconvenience and adding manifestly to the number of her impresario's grey hairs. By the way, she tells me that she has also added considerably to the accommodation, comforts, and attractions of her pretty place in Wales, which is now, to quote her own words, "all that her heart can wish." She has built a new wing, in which the gorgeous billiard-table presented to her by the citizens of San Francisco is lodged, and a clock-tower, the four dials of which are illuminated by electric light, whilst its peal of five huge bells strike the "Westminster chimes." Her beautiful conservatories, which were monopolised by palms and exotics when I last saw them, are now utilised as dining-rooms, salons, and promenades when the weather is what it so very frequently is in South Wales. She has also had a new peach-house put up in the grounds, over 100 ft. long, and constructed on the "patent dry glazing system," whatever that may be. Electric light is applied throughout the castle, and in such sort that all its lamps, wires, and machinery may be handled with impunity. Madame Patti has spent a fortune over Craig-y-Nos; but it is quite evident to me that the gratification the place affords her, now that she has got it into perfect order, is worth all the money she has lavished upon it. For she really appears to be very happy in her Welsh fastness; and she deserves to be so, for she is the good fairy

of the picturesque valley in which it nestles, and from which her bounties have banished misery and want.

Amongst the more interesting musical "events" of the past month were the Duchess of Manchester's musical party on the Derby night, honoured by the presence of the Princess of Wales, and Sir Arthur Sullivan's soirée on Sunday, June 7, to which several celebrities of the artistic world, besides the fashionable "first flight," were invited "to meet T.R.H. the Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh." At both receptions the operatic baritone Signor Carpi (a new importation from Italy) made a good mark by his spirited singing of Burgmein's "Carmen" and Barbieri's "Habanera." He was especially fortunate in his accompanyists, Lady Mandeville and Sir Arthur in person. At the Duchess's party a lady named Carpenter played the violin with admirable taste and *finesse*, and a Miss Hamlin sang two songs so cleverly as to astir a necessarily undemonstrative audience up to something not unlike enthusiasm. Stars were abundant at Sullivan's entertainment. Miss Van Zandt, who had promised to come and sing her best to the Princes, excused herself at the eleventh hour, but Mesdames Albani and Sterling, and Messrs. Edward Lloyd, George Grossmith, Carpi, and George Henschel were all to the fore, and "discoursed most excellent music." Everything went off to perfection, including some of the delicious "Mikado" numbers, and when the gathering broke up all "Our Knight's" guests agreed that they had never spent a pleasanter evening. Many concerts were given during "the leafy month," but few of them presented any feature of striking novelty or importance. Mdlle. Clotilde Kleeberg's second P.F. Recital on the 6th was in every respect as interesting as her first, its programme ranging from Bach to Bizet, and exhibiting her as an accomplished mistress of every style of clavichord playing—I may even venture to say the best all-round pianiste, so far, of the season. At Madame Thea Sanderini's *matinée* on the 11th the *bénéficiaire* distinguished herself by excellent renderings of Mdme. Puzzi's "Waiting for Thee" and Sullivan's "Let me dream again," whilst Mdlle. Le Brun sang Massenet's *aria*, "Il est doux," with magnificent dramatic expression, and charmed her hearers by a sympathetic and tuneful delivery of an English ballad hight "You Know Best." On the 12th, Colonel Henry Mapleson gave a grand "Invitation" concert, followed by a succulent and well-served supper in the St. James's Hall, one of the artistes being his charming wife, who was rapturously encored in the difficult *scena* from Poniatowski's "Pierre de Médicis." The band of the Scots Guards played operatic and dance music quite delightfully, and Dr. Moffat explained the virtues of an instrument called the Ammoniaphone, from which it would appear that Italian airs may be extracted without the least technical training or musical skill. Truly this is a wonderful age we live in! I did not hear the Ammoniaphone do anything particular; but Dr. Moffat ought to know what it is capable of, as he invented it, and I have no reason to believe that he exaggerated its powers or resources. However that may be, Colonel Mapleson's concert was a success "all along the line."

Of Messrs. Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.'s recent publications the one I like best is a set of six duets for *soprano* and *alto*, composed to Shakespearean words by Miss Mary Carmichael. These two-part songs are melodious and easy to sing. Although the words have all been set before, and by musicians of renown (Schubert *entre autres*), Miss Carmichael's treatment of them suggests no invidious comparisons, and in one or two cases is worthy of unqualified praise. For instance, "When that I was a tiny little boy" is an extremely clever canon ; and there is true pathos in the setting of "A Poor Soul Sate Sighing." Brava, Miss Mary Carmichael !

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

Our Omnibus-Box.

A FEW words are due to my readers in the first number of a fresh volume of The Theatre magazine. Once more insuperable difficulties in connection with the publication of this work have been miraculously surmounted, and we start fair again, I hope, in a new home, under new auspices, with fresh encouragement. The Theatre will henceforward be published at Clement's House, Clement's Inn Passage, Strand, and I trust that our subscribers, our many supporters, and our faithful friends, the public, will no longer have to complain of the tedious delays, the erratic conduct, and the irritating method of publication that must have sorely taxed the patience of all who have remained true to the little ship which I have endeavoured to steer amidst rocks, shoals, and quicksands for five long years. A few weeks ago the vessel was nearly "wrecked in port." It was as near capsized as could possibly be ; but the captain stuck to his post and the officers stuck to the captain with such loyalty and endeavour that once more we find ourselves merrily sailing on an open sea. The motto that ought henceforward to be printed on The Theatre should be "Nil Desperandum." Often and often ill-luck has pressed on us ; we have encountered such gales and storms, one thing and another has so pulled us back, that the inevitable despair of the moment was only checked by a firm belief in the saying, "Never say die." That faith alone has kept the periodical afloat ; that faith once more enables me to make a fresh start with still another volume. We shall not change our tactics or our principles. We shall endeavour to be as earnest and persevering as ever ; but we shall, I trust, be more business-like, and shall not so severely tax the patience of the faithful few who have never deserted us in fair or foul weather. To all such I tender apologies for the past and promises of amendment for the future. The longer The Theatre lives the more interesting it must become as a record of the theatrical life of our time. Whilst we encourage fancy, we never ignore fact ; and in years to come it may be interesting to those who come after us to see preserved and bound up in this magazine the faces of the actors, actresses, dramatists, and critics of our

time side by side with the descriptions of the work that engaged their attention. Lucky those who have on their bookshelves a complete set of THE THEATRE. My best thanks are due to my friend, Mr. Austin Brereton, for his industry, patience, and loyalty, displayed at a time when we required all hands to help THE THEATRE in its need. When we were in our greatest stress it was the chief engineer who patched up the boiler and got the vessel afloat again. Without him we could scarcely have weathered the storm.

I cannot believe that THE THEATRE is at all less necessary now than it was five years ago. Theatrical literature has increased and multiplied; every month sees some new periodical started to do its best or its worst for the drama. Those who love scandal, gossip, and tittle-tattle, those who delight in seeing the stage misrepresented and the art of acting ridiculed are surely sufficiently supplied with continual doses of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness. If there is a mean motive to be applied to anyone or anything concerned in the profession of acting, we may be pretty sure it will not be neglected. On the stage and off the stage there never was a time when personalities were apparently more profitable. In fact, libel has become such a stock-in-trade of dramatic literature—so called—that it has ceased to astonish or even interest. An eminent judge remarked the other day that he was astonished that libel should be so continually treated as a crime; he would be still more astonished did he know that it has come to be accepted as a compliment. Falsehoods so gross and statements so abominable are so continually published about actors, actresses, and public writers who study the stage, in the hope of getting a little cheap advertisement out of an action at law, that sensible people ignore the trash and pass on. Who that has a grain of self-respect would care to be patronised by the men who consider it quite as much a jest to insult a woman they do not know, as to vilify any men of whom they are notoriously envious? Abuse from such people is praise indeed.

If I understand the readers of THE THEATRE, I am persuaded that they do not care one jot for the wretched gossip of the new "School for Scandal." They do not care a button to pry into the private lives of those who amuse them on the stage, and require no keyhole reporter to relate to them the slander of the club or the silly gossip of the stalls. They want the drama treated as its sister arts, music and painting, are treated, with seriousness and sympathy. The opinions advanced in this as in any other periodical of criticism may be taken for exactly what they are worth. They may be accepted or rejected according to the opinion or temperament of the reader. But I should be sorry indeed if one word had ever been printed in this magazine tending to lower or degrade the artists who labour for our amusement or the art with which some of us so sincerely sympathise. If it be true of one thing in this world, it is true of acting on the stage and writing about acting, "the labour we delight in physics pain."

"If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;
If not, why then this parting was well made."

JULIUS CAESAR.

Marie E. Bancroft

S. B. Bancroft

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY BARRAUD, 263, OXFORD STREET, W.

On the 20th July, 1885, closes at the Haymarket Theatre one of the most eventful epochs of theatrical management that the present playgoing generation has known. When Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft retire from the cares of office and seek that rest which they are so justly entitled to demand, a strong link will be severed between the present and the past. Twenty years ago! I wish that some of my readers could appreciate as I can appreciate the difference between the stage of 1865 and the stage of 1885, or could even faintly understand the sound, silent, patient, and persistent work that has been performed by these two celebrated players, who have devoted their life's energy to the services of the stage. I have said elsewhere, and I know it to be true, that the seeds of all that is excellent, systematic, wholesome, and decent on the modern stage were sown at the Prince of Wales's Theatre by this actor and actress, who, though they retire in the prime of life, were chiefly instrumental in restoring order and symmetry out of chaos and confusion. When the Bancroft revivalism is quoted to old playgoers, it is frequently asserted that there was nothing very new or wonderful in what they did. We are told that Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews put plays as well on the stage as theBancrofts ever did; that Planché was an archæologist and stage renovator long before the Bancrofts were ever born or thought of; that Macready s revivals and Phelps's revivals were held in honour, and were of real value years before it ever occurred to Miss Marie Wilton and Mr. Henry J. Byron to tempt "Society" up to the "dramatic dusthole" known as the Queen's Theatre, in the Tottenham Court Road. All this may be very true, but what I say is, and what I stoutly maintain and ever shall maintain is, that the influence of Madame Vestris, the influence of Macready, the influence of Phelps, the power of Planché, had singularly faded in the year 1865, when young blood, young energy, young enthusiasm, and young impulse made themselves felt, and demanded an attention that few reforms have created in the present eventful century. What, then, were the strong artistic influences felt when the Bancrofts made their name and their fame?

The condition of the stage in 1865 was absolutely disheartening. Phelps had done splendid work at Sadler's Wells, but was tired as a manager, though not played out as an actor. The Wigans were excellent artists, but they neglected their managerial opportunities. Benjamin Webster, at the Adelphi, had lost the heart and energy that he displayed at the Haymarket. Miss Herbert, at the St. James's, struggled and struggled vainly to stem the tide of theatrical depression. Stars shone in the dramatic firmament, but guiding spirit there was none. Sothern was a successful star; Miss Bateman was a successful star; Jefferson was a successful star; London ran after Fechter or anyone who could shine through the murky gloom that pervaded the theatrical atmosphere. The day of Robson was over. Actors of the old school, instead of encouraging actors of the new, looked down upon them as interlopers and upstarts. The stage was not destitute of good actors, but the method of manage-

ment was careless and inefficient. Good actor as Webster was, and popular as Buckstone ever must be, who shall say that the Adelphi or the Haymarket of twenty years ago could be regarded as pattern establishments for a great and influential capital. If the playgoer of to-day could only see how plays were produced then, he would recognise the difference. It is one thing to get the power, but quite another to use it well and in the right direction. I do not for a moment suppose that when Miss Wilton and Mr. Byron took the Prince of Wales's Theatre, that they had the faintest idea what would be the outcome of their visionary schemes and energy. Robertson, henceforward to be famous, was writing stories for Mr. Beeton, in the Strand, for a few shillings a column, and translating French plays for Mr. Lacy for a five pound note. Only Gilbert and Gilbert's friends had the faintest idea what was in him or of what he was capable. Burnand and Halliday had managed to thrust themselves into notice. Tom Taylor, Leicester Buckingham, and Sterling Coyne knew the French stage, and annexed what they conveniently could. Boucicault understood his trade as well as his art.

Some day it will have to be told how the young school of enthusiasts was helped by a cheerful knot of intelligent and theatre-loving barristers. The Northern Circuit, and the firm friendships made among the lawyers there, had not a little to do with the early success of the Prince of Wales's Theatre. When Mrs. Bancroft writes her book she will, no doubt, have some kindly word to say of John Holker and W. R. McConnell, and Charles Russell and Temple, and many more who welcomed the revivalists. Liverpool played an important part in the story of the old Prince of Wales's Theatre. At Liverpool, Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Hare were discovered, the one a recognised provincial actor, the other a pupil of Leigh Murray. From Liverpool, the compact and perfected little company hailed that astonished us so when "Society" was first produced in London. The old Prince of Wales's company was as much at home in Liverpool as in London. The theory of their good work was this, that the star system was revoked in favour of the individual merit system. Decency and order were re-established. Those who had to wear a dress coat on the stage went to a West-end tailor, and not to a slop seller. The ladies' ball dress did not come out of the theatrical rag-bag. Make-up was promoted to the region of a fine art. "Joins" in wigs were no longer seen, old men did not have a bar-sinister on their wrinkled foreheads. When boy-faced Mr. Hare appeared as an old gentleman of seventy, the world was astonished at the sight. Young men looked like young men, and old men bore the appearance of age. Nothing was left to chance, and all the best work sprang from endeavour. These were the small beginnings of great things. The marriage of the Bancrofts sealed a great work of enterprise and enthusiasm. She brought genius, and he a refined taste and business tact of extraordinary value. I have no idea at the present moment of following the career of the Bancrofts in detail, but the value of their work will be shown on the

night of their retirement next month, when will be gathered on the Haymarket stage those who have fought under their banner, that is to say, some of the most prominent actors and actresses on the English stage. On that occasion will be seen Mrs. Stirling, Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. John Hare, Mr. John Clayton and Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. David James, Mr. Charles Wyndham, Mr. Coghlan, Miss Lydia Foote, Miss Amy Roselle, together with Mr. Toole, who acted with Miss Marie Wilton when they first appeared at the Lyceum under Charles Dillon's management, and Mr. Henry Irving, who was within an ace of being engaged for the old Prince of Wales's Theatre after his success at the Vaudeville. In fact, the best part of the London managers have played under the Bancroft *régime*, and their influence is widespread.

But there is one feature of the Bancroft management that should not be overlooked. Their career and their relations with actors and actresses have never at any time been embittered by that miserable envy and jealousy that disfigures the story of so many artistic lives. They have been as generous as they are honest and single-minded. Nothing hindered them from getting that which was best, and recognising merit wherever it could be found. Many actresses grow green with jealousy. Rivalry makes them hysterical. The success of another is positive pain to them. They employ every device to belittle, to detract, and to besmirch the fame of those who are luckier or cleverer than themselves. Even actors are not superior to this littleness of life. They stand upon their dignity, they weep if their names are not printed in larger type or in a more prominent position than their rivals'. The Bancrofts never lent themselves to these small devices. They set a good example. They were as unselfish as they were charitable in all their dealings. They paid better salaries than any managers of their time—too good, as many believe. They did not prate about the cardinal virtues or preach about the social status of the stage. They did not weary us with their paltry Pharisaism or sicken us with their cant. They did their work like honest people. They loved their art and did not make a fuss; and they will be held in honour long after the Pharisees are forgiven and happily forgotten. They engaged people because they could act, and not because they were district visitors, or rented a pew in the parish church, or bathed their babies when they came home from rehearsal. They steered clear of gossip, slander and tittle-tattle. They did not worry themselves or their neighbours with what did not concern them. They were in charity with their neighbours, and did their utmost to help those who had fallen by the way. It was no delight to them to stab and wound, but a pleasure to forgive and forget. They understood charity, and practised it. They leave their profession with the good will of all, and they have set an example that others would do well to follow.

Now that the career of "Bad Boys" is over, and that certain dexterous persons are becoming a little tired of publishing misrepresentations concerning the writer who was not directly responsible for the play, who never announced that he was the author of it, and who never desired to claim any credit for his share in the composition of it, perhaps that same individual may be permitted to say a few words in his own defence. It became necessary, owing to managerial policy, to produce an English version of "Clara Soleil" in five days! That task I accomplished, working literally night and day in order to do my best for those who had entrusted me with the work. This same rough or preliminary version was then carefully revised and supervised and amended by Mr. Augustus Harris, a manager and a writer for the stage of considerable experience. The revised version of Mr. Harris was then submitted to a committee of three, consisting of Mr. Charles Wyndham, who has had more practical experience of farcical plays than any actor or manager living, of Mr. Augustus Harris, and of myself.

We went over every line, every sentence, and every situation, each one contributing some new idea or improvement. Thus revised *literatim et verbatim* the play was put into rehearsal. The rehearsals were conducted by Mr. Harris and Mr. Wyndham alternately. I did not attend a single rehearsal until the last day, when I found that the play was not fit to be produced. The lawn tennis scene, with which I had opened the first act, had been altered to the clumsy shuttlecock business as in the original. The first act as undergrasped by the performers wanted considerable polish, for there was no sparkle or life in the acting; there were several opportunities for songs by such public favourites as Arthur Roberts and Violet Cameron; the play was unaccompanied by any music, and at each fall of the curtain a depression could be distinctly felt. To sum up, I wanted the play to be postponed for a few days, to be revised, corrected, and called "Jenny Wren." Mr. Wyndham went further, and wanted it postponed for reconsideration, in order that a new motive might be found for the departure of Charles Basevey to Scarborough with the actress. But managerial policy overruled all, and the play was produced before it was ready, and full of mistakes.

In these circumstances I made a special stipulation that my name should not be officially mentioned in any way in connection with the play. It will be seen from the foregoing to what extent I was responsible for it. But on the first night my name *was* officially announced from the stage as the sole author, as solely and wholly responsible for the play, and in virtue of that announcement, which was unauthorised by me, I have had to bear the sole blame of "Bad Boys." Whether this is quite fair to me I leave it to others to judge. When a writer puts his name to a work he is responsible for it, but when he does not it is scarcely fair to compel him to be the author against his will. It is almost impossible now-a-days for a writer to produce a play anonymously. The paragraphist placards a name before it is authorised. The untruth or the half-truth is printed in a hundred papers, and though the official play-bill

"Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move."

TENNYSON.

Florence Warden

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,

contains no authority whatever for the name of any particular writer, the suggested author is made wholly responsible. When all the programmes and play-bills are silent on the question of authorship for some very proper reason, out comes a report with the statement that, although no author is mentioned, it is an open secret that it is Mr. So-and-So. And yet, if a writer braves everything and placards his name, he is equally ridiculed for his assurance in identifying himself with a play that is not really his!

Miss Florence Warden, the authoress of the "House on the Marsh," whose photograph appears in this number, sends the following autobiographical sketch:—

"I was born in the village of Hanworth, in Middlesex. After being a stubborn and intractable child under nurses and governesses at home, I was sent, with my sister, to a school at Brighton, where she passed a brilliant career as the idlest, wittiest, and most daring girl in the house; while I sneaked through a mean existence as a steady, industrious girl, not clever, but very conceited. At this time I used to write poems, at night, three or four lines at a time, before the gas was put out. After this, we went to school in France, and founded a great reputation at private theatricals. This was my first experience as playwright and manager.

"I left school just in time to learn that through my father's losses on the Stock Exchange I should have to earn my own living. I became a governess for a short time, and worked very hard, to qualify myself, not only for teaching, but for novel-writing.

"At last, as I could get nobody to read my MSS., and as the lady whose five children I was teaching said it was 'a pity I should waste my time on such trash,' I dropped the trash and the teaching together, and went on the stage with my sister, against everybody's wishes.

"For three years we had a horrible and dreary struggle with debt, with ill-health, with difficulties of all kinds. Then, on the verge of an illness from which I was not expected to recover, I wrote, in two months, 'The House on the Marsh,' which ran in the *Family Herald* without any success, but which, happily for me, hit the taste of the general public in volume form, when it had been noticed by Mr. Edmund Yates in *The World*.

"Since then, I have written other stories, and have made my first serious attempt at writing for the stage."

On May 30, the Busy Bees A.D.C. gave a morning performance at the Gaiety Theatre, in aid of the funds of the Central London Throat and Ear Hospital, and had a very full house. The performance was given under the direction of Mrs. Lennox Browne. The first piece acted was the dramatic episode, in one act, by Sir Charles Young, "For Her Child's Sake," and never has Mrs. Lennox Browne been seen to better advantage than in the difficult part of Edith Ormonde; she showed much feeling, and acted well throughout. Mr. Arthur Ayers, as Stephen Ormonde

gave a refined and pathetic impersonation. Miss Fores Brette and Mr. Erskine Loch made a charming pair of young lovers, and Mr. Claude Penley was well suited as the Grandfather. This touching little piece went off very smoothly. Its representation can rank among the very best things done by the Busy Bees. "The Palace of Truth" showed some good individual playing, but, as a whole, the acting was very uneven. Mrs. Lennox Browne's Queen Altemire is well known, and was as excellent as ever. Miss Edith Gellibrand was a very charming Zéolide, and Miss M. Brandon was a good Mirza. It is to be regretted that Miss M. Evelyn, who acted Palmis, did not keep her former rôle of Azèma, for Mrs. William Harding was unsuited with this part. Mr. T. W. Cope made an excellent King Phanor. Mr. T. W. Clark and Mr. E. W. Tugwell did well as Aristæus and Gélanor. Mr. W. L. Hallward was not good as Prince Philamir. An amateur orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Perceval Nairne, rendered good service.

Mr. E. Watts Russell gave a recital at the Princes' Hall on the afternoon of June 3. The programme was varied and well selected. "The Ode to the Death of the Duke of Wellington," however, is far too long to be well suited for recitation. Mr. Watts Russell has a good voice, and his enunciation is distinct, but rather slow. In "Doncaster St. Leger" he roused himself, and showed some spirit, producing a far better effect than in the other pieces.

During the month of June, the day without a concert must indeed have been noted as a rare exception. Many were uninteresting, and a few were good. Among the latter must be placed Madame Puzzi's annual morning concert, which took place at St. George's Hall, on June 1. The chief feature was, of course, the singing of Madame Trebelli, and on this occasion we were struck with the extraordinary freshness and youthfulness of her voice. The "Semiramide" of Glück is an opera little known to the general public. "Vieni se poi Sereno," selected by Madame Trebelli, is an admirable example of the composer's masterly power, and displays the singer to great advantage. As the grand notes of Madame Trebelli's voice rang through the hall, she thrilled her audience into rapt silence. A remarkable contrast to this was Chopin's Mazurka, kindly given by Madame Trebelli, instead of Madame Marie Roze, this lady being too ill to appear. This was sung with vivacity and charm. Madame Trebelli also gave Miss Fanny Puzzi's exceedingly taking canzone, "L'Indovina." Several other of the same composer's works were given very successfully during the concert. Mr. Maybrick, in capital voice, was especially good in "The Owl," gaining an encore and introducing a new verse to the song.

The Balfe Memorial Concert also ranks among the interesting events of the season, all the more so because at it Madame Christine Nilsson made her first appearance this year. I have rarely seen Albert Hall more crowded than it was on the night of the 10th of June. The programme

was exclusively made up of Balfe's works, and the choice of songs, I understand, was not left to the artists. Large selections from "The Talisman" and "The Bohemian Girl" were given, together with many miscellaneous pieces. Madame Christine Nilsson was in admirable voice, and sang splendidly. The same can also be said of Madame Trebelli. Mr. Sims Reeves sang in his usual excellent style. Mr. Herbert Reeves was also in the programme. Mr. Leslie Crotty gave a good and sympathetic rendering of the pieces allotted to him, and Mr. Maas was successful in his second solo. Mdlle. Ida Corani, and Miss Hope Glenn gave some popular songs.

I had arranged for our readers this month a delightful surprise. Unfortunately the sad accident of ill health has interfered with my scheme. I wanted an article on "Olivia," now running with such excellent success at the Lyceum, from the pen of my friend William. Winter, the *doyen* of American dramatic critics, who knows the stage by heart, a scholar in style, and an impressionist by nature. At the last moment Mr. Winter was compelled to ask for a respite, but he has promised to tell us all about "Olivia," and the impressions made upon his sympathetic mind by the acting of Mr. Henry Irving as Dr. Primrose and Miss Ellen Terry as Olivia, next month. I would not touch the subject myself with the prospect of Mr. Winter's article before me. May our English July revive him, and give him strength to write yet about "Olivia" among the roses in some quiet old-fashioned English garden!

The Dying Actor!

JUST one faint whisper, as the actor died,
Between his lips, still ripe with laughter, crept;
He moaned not for the fading past, nor sighed;
No cry we heard, we watched him and we wept!
The old sad smile, softer than any song,
Came back for one swift minute, as the cage
Of life was closing: then he spoke, "They're wrong!
"The wrong side of the stage!"

Dear dying friend! were you then wandering
Back to old scenes of busy industry?
Was it some melody you tried to sing,
Did you recall some happy memory?
Was your desire, half dreaming, to prolong
The fancy of a lifetime, and engage
Once more in recollection? saying "Wrong!
"The wrong side of the stage!"

Or was it—yes, it must have been, old friend!—
A mirrored future you were looking through?
When all desire of life was at an end,
Visions of happiness appeared to you!
And as your tired thoughts were borne along
From merry childhood to advancing age,
You thought of paradise, and left us "Wrong
"The wrong side of the stage!"

C. S.

THE THEATRE.

Victor Hugo.

A FEW EPISTOLARY REMINISCENCES AND NOTES.

By Joseph Hatton.

I.

THERE hangs upon the wall before me, while I write, a photograph of a white-haired, elderly man. The eyes are dark, the face has wrinkles in it that suggest age more than care. The mouth is wide, the forehead ample, the nose large, the ears beyond the ordinary size. It is the face of a strong, sensuous, liberal-minded, generous, intellectual, and remarkable man. It always recalls to me the face of Charles Reade, and the characters of the two men were in many respects alike. There is written underneath this photograph, "*Ma tête à vos pieds.*—Victor Hugo."

The illustrious Frenchman sent it to me with his own hand. Through a Guernsey neighbour (Mr. Oliver) I also received several other remarkable photographs. One of them is from Victor Hugo's drawing of a gibbet charged with its human load of criminality. Of this work a Parisian paper in 1869 said: "Years ago Victor Hugo made a pen-and-ink drawing of a corpse swinging on a gallows. The only title that he could find for his drawing was the onomatopœic word *couic*. Shortly afterwards Victor Hugo heard of the execution of John Brown. He at once effaced the monosyllabic legend and wrote under his drawing, 'John Brown.' The drawing was engraved, and may still be met with, though rarely, in the hands of dealers." The photograph of the picture sent to me by Victor Hugo bears simply the signature of the original and the date—"Victor Hugo, 1860." The drawing was certainly not made without an object. The great novelist had no doubt in his mind (if he had not already sketched the chapter)

the incident of the boy in "L'Homme qui Rit" coming upon the gibbet in the storm. You will find it under the heading of "Conflict between Death and Night," and it is one of the most graphic and Hugoish pieces of weird description in the book. You can see the corpse; you can hear its chains creaking in the wind; you can feel the chill of the storm and the horror of it. As the gale comes up from the sea in gusts, you can feel that the corpse emphasises its dismal oscillations. It no longer swings; it is tossed. The chain no longer grinds; it shrieks. You hear the rushing noise that follows—a noise of wings. The flight of ravens is another terrible reality. Black, flying specks prick the clouds, pierce the mist, increase in size, come nearer, amalgamate, thicken, utter cries, and alight on the gibbet. They talk and croak, the wind responds to the foul birds' croaking acceptance of putrefaction. You can fancy you hear the tomb breaking silence. Presently the croaking ceases. Then a single raven perches on the skeleton. This is a signal for the rest. They all precipitate themselves upon the corpse. There is a cloud of wings; then all the feathers close up and the hanged man disappears under a swarm of black blisters struggling in the obscurity. Presently the corpse moves. Is it he? Or is it the wind? He makes a frightful bound. The hurricane comes to his aid. The phantom falls into convulsions. The squall seizes him and hurls him about in all directions, and the ravens cling on to him. Then as if some grim humorist of the night had seized the chain and was playing with the mummy, it turns and leaps. It even terrifies the birds. It is as if there is suddenly an explosion of these unclean creatures. Then they return and adapt themselves to the hideous movements of the corpse, tossed to and fro in the gale. So graphic in its details is the picture that you realise the reality of it, though it is a work of pure imagination. It is poetic realism, not the Zola realism of gutter reporting. I wish some wise critic would explain what is meant by realism in art, and what is the kind of realism we ought to admire. It seems to me that Zola's is the realism of a reporter who catalogues scenes of filth and horror, and that Hugo's realism is the realism of imagination, the ideality that (as I always feel in regard to the creative power of Dickens), if it shows you a dirty, festering pool in the streets, does not forget to give you a glimpse of its bit of reflected blue sky; for the sun and the sky do not discard the dirtiest of puddles. On the other hand, the realism of Zola shows you only the festering pool,

without light or rain or a ripple of wind upon it ; and the author does not forget to let you smell it. Which is the true art realism. of these different ideas of the puddle ?

" L'Homme qui Rit " was published by special arrangement with Victor Hugo under my editorship of the *Gentleman's Magazine.* The negotiations were conducted and completed by Mr. S. H. Bradbury, of the firm of Bradbury and Evans. The work of translation was placed in the hands of Mr. E. S. Dallas, who was assisted by two very accomplished ladies. Further help had to be obtained from naval officers, the marine technicalities were so numerous and far-fetched. If Hugo had worked with half-a-dozen technical dictionaries at his elbow, he could not have raked up more curious and obsolete phrases and similes belonging to shipbuilding and navigation. Before half the work was in my hands an awful discovery was made. For the first time Victor Hugo had descended into the pit of indecency. Charles Reade sold a novel years ago to a New York paper, and a similar calamity occurred. Reade wrote in all honesty. There was nothing prurient in the story from his point of view. It was strong and human, and not written for babes ; but the editor of the New York *Times* could not swallow it. In the case of " L'Homme qui Rit " the taint was only in a few chapters. It clung to the atmosphere of the Duchess's passion for Gwynplaine. It was very real, not dirty as Zola is, but the incidents had a very ugly look in English. French somehow covers a multitude of sensual sins English, thank goodness, shows them up. I was asked by the publishers, " What about these chapters ?" The *Times* had an editorial article upon the story. It asked what the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was going to do with certain chapters which, it declared, " ought not to be and cannot be translated." Mr. Dallas replied ; I replied ; we conducted quite an interesting correspondence in the leading journal.

" Your magazine will go up in circulation by thousands," said a rival publisher whom I met in the Strand while the correspondence was in progress. " You are a clever crowd." And I believe we thought we were. The publishers broke in upon the correspondence with advertisements in the *Times* and in the other papers, and with posters on the walls. They printed extra copies of the next edition, and bound up a fresh stock of back numbers. It is a curious fact in the history of advertising, and should be placed on record, that all this fuss, this free advertising, this legitimate, this expensive

advertising, did not move our sale fifty copies, did not sell us twenty back numbers; and, although "L'Homme qui Rit" was illustrated by the best black and white artist we could find—Mr. S. L. Fildes—my own unheralded novel of "Christopher Kenrick" did far more for the circulation and profit of the *Gentleman's* than did the great dramatic and masterly romance of "L' Homme qui Rit."

A Paris writer says:—"The resources of *réclame* and puffism were never neglected by Victor Hugo and his publishers in announcing his works. In the press he always had plenty of friends, a fact which prevented him from ever being reasonably criticised." How astonished these French friends would have been had they known how little "advertising and puffism" may sometimes do even for the greatest author. I suppose all the other magazine publishers in London envied the publishers of the *Gentleman's* when the correspondence and advertisements about "L'Homme qui Rit" were appearing in the *Times*.

II.

But this is by the way—take it *en parenthèse*: we were discussing the difficulty of the chapters which the *Times* said could not be and ought not to be translated. "What are you going to do about them?" at last asked publishers and translators. They never appeared to have thought of the right way out of the difficulty. My decision came upon them with the surprise of a thunderbolt falling from a clear sky. All kinds of compromises had occurred to them except the only one that was possible. "I am going to leave them out!" I said. Ah! they had never thought of that. Leave them out! A wonderful solution of the difficulty. Then they began to fight it. The story would be mutilated. What would Victor Hugo say? "Oh, we will call it condensation," I said; "we must not hurt his feelings; he has already rather a poor opinion of English people; we must remember his prejudices and be diplomatic." And so it came about that I wrote to the *Athenæum* and the *Times*, and the condensation plan was worked, and in my correspondence with Victor Hugo I referred to "the republication of the story, when the publishers can restore such passages as I may not deem necessary in the serial publication." Diplomacy, as a rule, means lying. This was not lying, but it was nevertheless diplomatic—the diplomacy of respect for a great man; the diplomacy of desir-

ing not to wound his susceptibilities. The following is one of the most characteristic of the letters I received from Victor Hugo at that time. It is written clearly, with very thick up and down strokes, on thin letter paper. It will be interesting just now to print a translation of it :—

Hauteville House, March 31st, 1870.

Sir,—I do not know English, and I have shown it. A misprint taken out of a dictionary—*bug-pipe* for *bag-pipe*—furnished a certain English journal, four years ago, with nearly the only serious criticism which it raised against "The Toilers of the Sea." I cannot, consequently, judge of your translation of "L'Homme qui Rit." Your talent as a writer is well known to me, and I am convinced that you have done for the best. However, I approve of your publishing in the book trade *an absolutely complete translation*. My book is not, properly speaking, a romance; it is meant to instruct at the same time as to interest, and it mixes history and philosophy with the drama. The pages of history and philosophy are accordingly very important, because they explain the author's aim, and I recommend them to your excellent understanding. Several of your illustrations couldn't have succeeded better.

Believe, sir, in my ardent cordiality,

Victor Hugo.

To Mons. Joseph Hatton, editor *Gentleman's Magazine*.

III.

Among the photographs which were sent to me about this period through Victor Hugo's excellent friend and neighbour, Mr. S. P. Oliver, is a picture of Hugo in his *salon*. The poet is standing by the fireplace, his arm leaning upon a chair, and amidst surroundings which quite realise the description of him in the third volume of the letters of Charles Dickens. The English genius wrote as follows of his visit to the French genius in 1847 :—

"We were at Victor Hugo's house last Sunday week, a most extraordinary place, looking like an old curiosity shop, or the property-room of some gloomy, vast old theatre. I was much struck by Hugo himself, who looks like a genius, as he is, every inch of him, and is very interesting and satisfactory from head to foot. His wife is a handsome woman, with flashing black eyes. There is also a charming daughter of fifteen or sixteen, with ditto eyes. Sitting among old armour and old tapestry, and old coffers and grim old chairs and tables, and old canopies of State from old palaces, and old golden lions going to play at skittles with ponderous golden balls, they made a most romantic show, and looked like a chapter out of one of his own books."

In another picture of Hugo in his arbour, there is a sad, reflective expression in his face. He has the look that strongly recalls Reade in his garden that abutted on Hyde Park; and Hugo, in the picture,

wears a soft hat, as Reade often did, a loose black shooting jacket, gray waistcoat and trousers, and open vest,with a small black necktie. I never saw Victor Hugo, though I received a kindly invitation to Guernsey, but I often told Reade how like Hugo he appeared to me (Hugo was much shorter in stature), and how many traits I thought alike in their characters. Reade had Hugo's passionate hatred of oppression and wrong, the same sentiment of sympathy for the poor; and his style was often Hugoish in its terse, short telling sentences, though he never in his tenderest dreams had such poetic fancies as Hugo had every day. Hear it not, "Ouida," they doth disliked dogs. Hear it not, worshipper of Wagner Hugo disliked music. Reade loved to hear the violin played, and was an expert in regard to the manufacture of that instrument I was the medium through whom Mr. Barnet Phillips, the American author and journalist, presented him with one of the finest instruments in his collection. It was made in New York.

IV.

Mr. Oliver, who, with Victor Hugo's sanction and assistance, wrote for me in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a sketch of the great author's life and doings at Guernsey, supplied me with some notes on the poet's industry and his dislike of all dogs but one. "Methodical to a fault," he wrote, "our neighbour, Victor Hugo, works incessantly, and nothing is suffered to interrupt his usual routine of labour. One idea pervades his mind, that his life is not long enough for him to perform his mission in this world; although he hopes for time to complete the great trilogy on which he is now engaged, the subjects of which are to be aristocracy, monarchy, and lastly revolution. For instance, at this present moment, the billiard-room at Hauteville House is locked up, and in it are stored heaps of tapestry, many valuable paintings, engravings, and *objets de vertu*, which he will allow no one but himself to touch, and which are intended some day to be arranged in order; but although his friends are so anxious to have these treasures brought to light, he always repeats that he has no spare time to waste in looking them over. One particular trait in Victor Hugo's character is remarkable, and that is his peculiar hatred or dread of dogs, as a rule. One dog only is an exception, and that is a fat Italian greyhound, which is a favoured companion to Mdme. Chenay. For some time this greyhound used to wear a

brass collar, with the following distich engraved thereon, in which Senat epitomises his position in the Guernsey world thus :—

"Je voudrais que chez moi quelqu'un me ramenat.
Mon état? Chien. Mon maître? Hugo. Mon nom? Senat."

Unfortunately, this collar was stolen and replaced by a new one some half-a-dozen times, till at last Victor Hugo forbade any more collars being expended, and thus it comes to pass that poor Senat runs about collarless."

One day when Mr. Oliver was dining with Hugo, the subject discussed at table was the education of ladies, *apropos* of a series of lectures then being given by a young Professor (present at table) to the young ladies of Guernsey. On some of those present objecting to the excessive love of novel reading by young girls, Victor Hugo launched out a masterly defence of novelists, from Homer down to Dante and Cervantes; at the same time, he allowed the evil of young girls being allowed to read certain works by Dumas and Paul de Kock. Another time, the inspiration of the Holy Bible was in question, and Victor Hugo was accused of not having sufficiently studied it, or else he could not doubt but that it was the revelation of God. M. Victor Hugo eulogised the Holy Scriptures as the most wonderful literary production of the world; at the same time, he said, "Permit me to have my own opinion. I will not say that I do not wish to be convinced, but I have read it and have not been convinced."

V.

This is what Hugo said to a friend of mine in Paris, two years ago, about Rachel and Sarah Bernhardt :—

"Rachel only played one of my characters, Thisbe, in "Angelo," which she acted in an admirable manner. But this remarkable woman was not constituted for melodrama. She was essentially a tragedienne; there was nothing light about her, and most of my heroines have a certain lightness in the earlier scenes, which she failed to understand. I did not like her at first.

"M. Arsène Houssaye introduced her to me, and I received her coldly. But her force of character and will were so strong that she managed somehow or other to make everybody forget she was extremely plain. She was, however, essentially a classical actress, and not suited for my style of pieces. Had she lived, I might have written expressly for her as I had done for Mars and Dorval. Sarah

Bernhardt, who has absolute genius, is Dona Sol. Nobody can rival her in the last act, when even I felt proud of my lines—hearing them spoken with so much taste and passion by this voice of liquid gold. Sarah has the most wonderful voice I have ever heard. Her passion, too, is so real, so touching, that if she has not the tremendous concentrated power of Rachel, she certainly equals her in many ways. She is so poetical and graceful, and above all, so patrician in appearance. In 'Ruy Blas' she has but a few words to say, but the moment she crosses the stage you feel her presence, and become interested in watching her slightest movement. The revival of my plays, 'Ruy Blas,' 'Hernani,' 'Lucrèce,' and 'Le Roi s'Amuse,' has interested me greatly. I little imagined, at my advanced age, when I was in Guernsey, that I should ever assist again at the performance of my own dramas in Paris, and with such fine actresses as Mesdames Bernhardt and Marie Laurent to interpret them, not to mention Mounet-Sully and Got, who are always perfect in style and appearance."

VI.

The poet-novelist (according to a Parisian biographer) wrote very quickly, but often corrected laboriously. He rarely re-wrote, Mme. Drouet, who was his literary secretary for thirty years, copied all his manuscripts. Otherwise the printers would have found him one of the most difficult authors to put into type. Mme. Drouet saved them much worry, and himself or his publishers much expense in the way of composition. She also assisted in the correction of the proofs. He generally had several works on the stocks at the same time. Thackeray, I think it was, who described change of subject as a recreation. Hugo evidently regarded his work from this industrious standpoint. He would go from poetry to fiction, from fiction to history, according to his mood. As a rule he rose at six o'clock in the morning, took a cold bath, then took a raw egg and a cup of black coffee, and went to work. What the work was depended upon the inspiration of the moment. In Paris he breakfasted at eleven, and one of his recreations was riding on the top of an omnibus, a habit he contracted during a short visit to London, when he was advised that "the knife-board" is a good place from which to see the street life of the English metropolis.

A correspondent in the French capital tells me that the unpublished manuscripts left by Victor Hugo are of no great value. I

wonder no English "melodramatist" has dealt with the story of "L'Homme qui Rit." The late Mark Lemon in association with myself obtained the author's permission to dramatise the story for the English stage. But for some reason or other we contented ourselves with this first step in our difficult enterprise. I remember that the philosopher selling his phials at the fair, the incident of the finding of Dea in the snow, and the ship in the storm were scenes that were marked for representation. The question of the hero's mutilated face troubled us; but I think we agreed to treat him from the man-in-the-iron-mask point of view. He was not to show his face to the audience. We talked to Benjamin Webster about the projected work. He liked the idea. If he had commissioned the play, I wonder what it would have been like. "What may be done at any time will be done at no time." "L'Homme qui Rit" has not, that I am aware of, been dramatised in France or England.

Theodora.

Gaiety Theatre, July 11, 1885.

Inscribed to Madame Sarah Bernhardt.

EMPRESS and Courtesan! With every line
Of sinuous limbs instinct with savage lust;
O murderess who gave the deadly thrust
With golden bodkin: what a fate was thine.
Yet in thy splendid vice right leonine,
Cheering the craven with that voice which vowed
The palace walls would be thy fittest shroud,
When Atropos should give the fatal sign.
We see thee in thy splendour robed liked those
Born in the porphyry chamber; and anon
Facing undaunted all the gathering foes;
With Andreas how fair to look upon.
Thou reignest in that strange Byzantine dream,
Augusta certes. In thine art supreme.

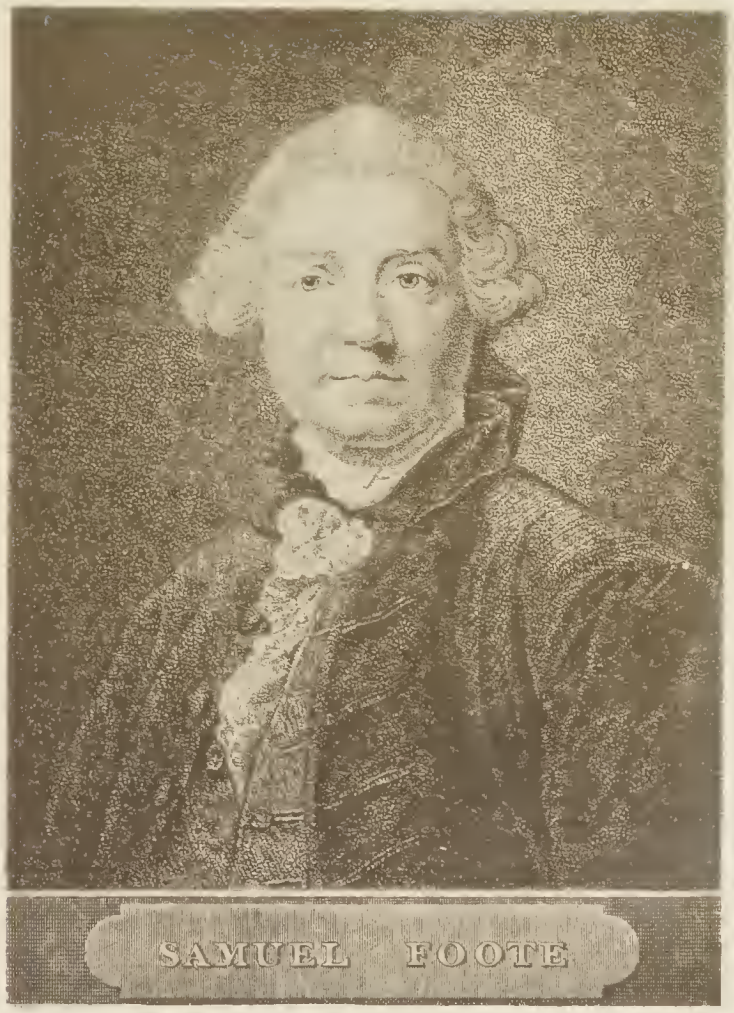
H. Savile Clarke.

Samuel Foote as a Humorist.

"Foote is, however, very entertaining, with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery."—*Dr. Johnson.*

By Henry Marden.

DR. JOHNSON gave his opinion about Foote on more than one occasion, and there can be no doubt that he measured his man very accurately—more accurately than was always agreeable to the wag himself, for, like a good many jokers, Foote did not exhibit a very thick skin against the criticisms of others. Moreover, he seems to have had a wholesome dread of a stout cudgel. On one occasion it came to the knowledge of "the great lexicographer" that Foote was about to burlesque him in a piece called "The Orators." Dr. Johnson at once commissioned a friend to buy for him the thickest stick obtainable in town, at the same time letting it be known to the author and the public that he intended to plant himself in the front of the stage-box, and if any buffoon attempted to take him off, or ridicule him personally, to spring on the stage, knock down the offender, and appeal to the audience for protection. In consequence of this intimation the dramatist relinquished his original intention, and substituted a parody of a gentleman who had had the misfortune to lose a leg. Four years later Foote broke his own leg, and thus had the unexpected opportunity of realizing the point of the joke in his own person. Boswell records a conversation which shows that the threatened castigation would certainly have been carried into effect, but for the timely alteration of the author's subject. Boswell: "Foote has a great deal of humour." Johnson: "Yes, sir." Boswell: "He has a singular talent of exhibiting character." Johnson: "Sir, it is not a talent; it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser, gathered from many misers; it is farce which exhibits individuals." Boswell: "Did not he think of exhibiting you, sir?" Johnson: "Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off."


SAMUEL FOOTE

Boswell also tells us that some time afterwards he informed Foote of what the Doctor had said. The occasion occurred in Edinburgh where Foote had been entertaining a numerous Scotch company with a good deal of coarse jocularity at the expense of the great man. Boswell mildly suggested that Johnson must be allowed to have some sterling wit, and that he had heard him say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. "Ah, my old friend Sam," cried Foote. "No man says better things; do let us have it." But he was extremely indignant when the story was told, and entered into a serious refutation of the justice of the criticism. "What, sir!" said he, "talk thus of a man of liberal education—a man who for years was at the University of Oxford—a man who has added sixteen new characters to the English drama of his country!"

In comparing Foote with Garrick upon another occasion, Dr. Johnson gave the palm to the former for powers of entertainment. "Garrick," said he, "has some delicacy of feeling—it is possible to put him out; you may get the better of him, but Foote is the most *incompressible* fellow I ever knew; when you have driven him into a corner, and think you are sure of him, he runs through between your legs, or jumps over your head, and so makes his escape."

Yet Foote could be serious enough at times, and, although not of a superstitious turn, he always showed the utmost gravity in speaking of a strange circumstance which occurred in Cornwall on the occasion of his marriage. In the evening, he and his wife were entertained with a concert of music, apparently beneath their window. It lasted for about twenty minutes. They were staying at his father's house, and took the serenade as a special compliment on the part of the old gentleman. To the astonishment of the bride and bridegroom, Foote senior denied all knowledge of the affair, and doubted the possibility of its having occurred. The young couple were quite positive, and Foote was so much impressed that he made a memorandum of the hour when the music was heard and it afterwards transpired that this was the very time when his uncle, Sir John Goodere, was brutally murdered.

It seems likely that Foote's lively humour and eccentric habits were inherited from his mother, who lived to the ripe age of eighty-four. Like her son, this facetious old lady was often in difficulties of a pecuniary character. "Dear Sam," she wrote, on one occasion, "I am in prison for debt; come and assist your loving mother, E. Foote." "Dear Mother," he replied, "so am I, which prevents

his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son, Sam Foote. P.S.—I have sent my attorney to assist you; in the meantime, let us hope for better days."

Foote's first literary earnings seem to have resulted from writing (anonymously) a defence of the perpetrator of the murder before alluded to. It was not a very creditable performance from a moral point of view, particularly as the author must have known that there was really nothing to be said for the criminal, whose crime was one of great atrocity. The writer's only excuse was that he was extremely hard up, so much so that on taking his manuscript to the bookseller he was obliged to wear his boots without stockings. On his way back he bought a pair, but almost immediately afterwards he met some old college chums, and agreed to dine with them at the Bedford. While the wine was circulating, one of his friends exclaimed, "Why, hey, Foote, how is this? You seem to have no stockings on." "No," replied he, "I never wear any at this time of the year, till I am going to dress for the evening; and, you see, I am always provided with a pair for the occasion." At the same time he pulled out of his pocket the silk stockings which he had bought at the hosier's a short time before.

Foote's first appearance on the stage was at the Haymarket Theatre on February 6, 1744, in the character of Othello. His friends attended in force, and applauded loudly, but it seems tolerably certain that the performance was a failure. Macklin, who played Iago, thought so, at any rate, and Foote soon afterwards tried comedy. He found that Lord Foppington suited him much better than the character of the jealous Moor. He afterwards introduced a novel kind of entertainment, which obtained considerable popularity, and excited great jealousy on the part of his rivals The performance was in much the same style as Mathews' "At Homes." Foote, however, invited the public "To Tea," and when the audience were seated, wondering what was going to happen, the manager came forward and announced "that, as he was training some performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, whilst tea was getting ready, proceed with his instruction before them." He then entered upon a series of ludicrous imitations of the best known actors of the day. Everybody enjoyed these parodies except the persons who were "taken off," and their exasperation did not trouble the enterprising mimic.

About a year afterwards a large fortune was left to him, and he

then adopted the life of a man of fashion, spending his time partly in London and partly on the Continent. Whilst he was abroad, however, he wrote a comedy, in two acts, called "Taste," which exhibited his usual talent and peculiarities.

Some years later Arthur Murphy became known as a critic and dramatic author, and, being well acquainted with Foote, wrote a piece called "The Englishman Returned from Paris." He took Foote into his confidence, and the latter immediately set to work on Murphy's materials. He dashed off a farce on the same lines and with the same title, and actually brought it out at Coven, Garden Theatre before the other work could be produced. One may imagine Murphy's wrath and surprise at this shabby trick; but it was impossible to make Foote ashamed—he was not a man to be taken seriously.

Foote spent some time in Dublin, and met with considerable success. On his return to London he was engaged by Garrick, and entered upon a very successful and profitable time at Drury Lane. He might have saved another fortune—the first having been spent—but for his extravagant style of living. He must needs have a town and a country house, servants, and society of an expensive character. One of Foote's aristocratic friends was Lord Kellie whose face—which was said to resemble in appearance the meridian sun—furnished the author with a subject for jokes of the most insolent type. Once, being annoyed with his lordship for not coming to dine with him, he called out, in a coffee-house, "Well, my lord, since you cannot do me the honour of dining with me to-day, will you be so good as you ride by just to look over my south wall, for, as we have had little or no sun for this fortnight past, my peaches will want the assistance of your lordship's *countenance*." On another occasion, Lord Kellie having cracked some coarse jokes about an Irish gentleman, one of the hearers said, "if he had treated him so, he would pull him by the nose." "Pull *him* by the nose!" exclaimed Foote; "you may as well thrust your hand into a furnace." Even at his own table Foote seems to have put no check upon his facetious propensities. On one occasion, when the same noble lord was dining at his house, somebody complained that the beer was cold. "Hand the tankard, then, to Lord Kellie," said the host, "and it will be *fireproof* in a moment!" Clearly his lordship was of a more enduring turn of mind than Dr. Johnson. Apart from personalities, Foote said many

a good thing. A young Member of Parliament having made a long declamatory speech, his uncle asked Foote how he liked it, and whether he did not think posterity would talk of the achievement. "Oh! no doubt, no doubt," said Foote, wishing to get rid of the subject. "Well," continued the uncle, "but what do you think they will say?" "Well, say," returned the other, pausing—"why, they must say, if they do the young gentleman justice, that he *once flourished in Parliament.*" Of the same M.P., who was rather backward in paying his debts, he afterwards remarked that "he was a very *promising* young man." A gentleman named Dibble Davis shared with Lord Kellie the privilege of being one of Foote's butts in ordinary. Upon his remarking that, well as he loved porter, he could never drink it without a head, Foote observed, "That must be a mistake, Dibble, as you have done so to my knowledge these twenty years."

Foote cannot be accused of toadying the aristocracy. He levelled his shafts at all sorts and conditions of men. Being questioned by Mr. Howard (who afterwards became Duke of Norfolk) as to what he thought of a work called "His Own Thoughts," just published, and of which Mr. Howard promised a second part, Foote at first declined to give an opinion, but, being pressed, at length replied, "I will wait for your next book, sir; *second thoughts are best.*"

A nobleman who was addicted to the bottle once asked Foote to suggest a new character in which he could attend a masquerade. "New character?" said the other. "Suppose you go sober, my lord?"

Foote's *mot* on the Grafton Ministry is worth repeating. A gentleman coming into the Cocoa-tree one morning observed that the poor Ministry were at their wit's end. "Well, if it should be so," said he, "what reason have they to complain of so short a journey?" Perhaps the story best known in connection with this audacious wag is with respect to "the mode of burying attorneys in London." A gentleman, who had just buried a relation who had followed the profession of the law, complained to Foote of the great expense of a country funeral. "Why! do you bury your attorneys here?" asked Foote gravely. "Yes, to be sure we do," was the reply. "Oh! we never do that in London." "No?" said the other, much surprised; "how do you manage?" "Why, when the patient happens to die," said Foote, "we lay him out in a room over night by himself, lock the door, throw open the sash, and in the morning he is entirely off." "Indeed!" said the guileless listener, in

amazement, "what becomes of him?" "Why that we cannot exactly tell, not being acquainted with the supernatural causes. All we know of the matter is that *there is a strong smell of brimstone in the room the next morning.*"

Foote did not confine his satire to the lower branch of the legal profession. He himself had in early life contemplated going to the bar, but after seeing enough of the law to enable him to point some of his caricatures, he gave up the idea of making it his own profession. "You are to consider, ladies and gentlemen," said he in "The Orators," "that the language of the bar is a species of oratory distinct from every other." The skit he gave in another play, "The Lame Lover," is certainly amusing. Here it is :—

[*Enter Sir Luke, Colonel, Mrs. Circuit, and Mrs. Simpson, dressed as Counsellors.*]

Sir Luke: Come, come, gentlemen, dispatch; the court has been waiting for some time. Brother Circuit, you have looked over your brief?

Mrs. Circuit: What, do you suppose, sir, that, like some of my brethren, I defer that until I come into Court? No, no!

Sir Luke: This cause contains the whole marrow and pith of all modern practice. . . . . And first for the state of the case. The parties, you know, are Hobson *v.* Nobson; the object of litigation is a small parcel of land, which is to decide the fate of a borough.

Mrs. Circuit: True, called Turnbury Mead.

Sir Luke: Very well. Then, to bring matters to a short issue, it was agreed that Nobson should use the premises, cut down a tree, and Hobson bring his action o damage.

Mrs. Circuit: True, true.

Sir Luke: Let silence be called.

Mrs. Simpson: Silence in the Court.

Sir Luke: But stop. To be regular and provide for fresh causes, we must take no notice of the borough and lands, the real objects in view, but stick fast to the tree, which is of no importauce at all.

All: True, true.

Sir Luke: Brother Circuit, you may proceed.

Mrs. Circuit: Gentlemen of the Jury,—I am in this cause Counsel for Hobson, the plaintift. The action is brought against Nebuchadonezer Nobson, that he the said Nobson did cut down a tree, value twopence, and to his own use said tree did convert. Nobson justifies and claims tree as his tree. We will first, gentlemen, state the probable evidence and then come to the positive. When was the tree here, belonging to Hobson and claimed by Nobson, cut down? Was it cut down publicly in the day, in the face of the sun—men, women and children, all the world looking on? No, it was cut down privately, in the night, on a dark night; nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see—Hum! And then with respect and regard to this tree, I am instructed to say, gentlemen, it was a beautiful, ornamental tree to the spot where it grew. . . . And, again, gentlemen, we, moreover, insist that this tree was not only ornamental to the spot where it grew, but it was a useful tree to the owner; it was a plum tree, and not only a plum tree, but I am authorised to say the best of plum trees. Now, can it be thought that any man would come for to go, in the middle of the night, nobody seeing, nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see, and cut down a tree, which tree was not only an ornamental tree, &c., &c.? Most assuredly no! If so be, then, that this be so, and so it most assuredly is, I apprehend no doubt will remain with the Court, but my client a verdict will have, with full costs of suit, in such a manner and so forth as may nevertheless appear notwithstanding.

Then comes the opposing Counsel in a similar strain.

One of Foote's most popular productions was a farce called "The Mayor of Garratt," but, like most of his works, it depended much on the exaggeration of personal characteristics, and therefore its flavour has long since evaporated. It brought grist to the mill —the play was produced in 1763—and of this the author then stood very much in need. He immediately resumed his old extravagance of living, and even spent £1,200 on a service of plate. A few years later he was poorer than ever. The remnant of his fortune, about £1,700, was gambled away at Bath, and he had to borrow money to pay his passage to Ireland. In Dublin his talents enabled him to repair his fortunes once again.

Returning to London in 1769, a bitter quarrel sprang up between Foote and Garrick, which culminated in a design on the part of Foote to represent the other manager in an insignificant part giving vent to a loud

"Cock-a-doodle-doo !"

Happily some mutual friends soothed the angry feelings of the rivals for popularity and peace was restored before things had gone too far. Although Foote could not easily brook the witticisms of others at his expense, he himself would occasionally turn a joke on some infirmity of his own, as thus. Being on a visit to Crabbe Boulton (Chairman of the East India Company) during a frosty season, he found such bad fires kept up that he resolved to go back to town. "Eh !" said his host, seeing the chaise at the door, "why think of going so soon ?" "Because if I stay any longer, perhaps I should not have a leg to stand on." "Why, we don't drink so hard as that." "No, but it freezes so hard, and your servants know the value of a good bit of timber so well, that I'm in hourly dread of losing my wooden leg." This was clever, though scarcely complimentary to Crabbe Boulton, but it was not Foote's habit to give too much consideration to the feelings of other people. Here, again, Dr. Johnson's verdict was a true one—"I am afraid Foote has no principle. He is at times neither governed by good manners nor discretion, and very little by affection. But for a broad laugh, I must confess the scoundrel has no fellow." Notwithstanding these opinions, Foote bore no malice against the man who expressed them, for he knew that, although Johnson was severe, he was just. Both were men of wit, but not in the same fashion. Foote was always ready with a retort. Johnson's sarcasms came more slowly

and on one occasion he confessed to Boswell that he had nothing ready; "a man cannot strike his antagonist till he has his weapons." With Foote, however, it was otherwise; he was not so particular, and, rather than remain silent, he would put on motley, "and strut in it with as much pride as in his most refined sallies of conversation." He spared nobody, not even the fair sex. The temptation of joking at the expense of a lady of the name of Gammon, although a personal friend of his, was to him quite irresistible. Perhaps he revenged himself in this way for the snubbing he once received from the talented Mrs. Clive, who, on being called to rehearsal for Portia, asked, "Who is to play Shylock?" "Mr. Foote, Madame," said Garrick (presenting him at the same time). "What, *you!*" exclaimed the actress, looking at him contemptuously, "*you* play Shylock to my Portia! Oh! then I'm off," and she immediately quitted the theatre and the play had to be abandoned. Foote was much abashed. Such a rebuff, so coarsely administered, must have sorely hurt his vanity, and it is said that he never again essayed to play Shylock before a London audience.

A woman—no less a person than the famous Duchess of Kingston—was undoubtedly the cause of embittering the latter years of Foote's life. In a rash moment he parodied her under the name of Lady Kitty Crocodile. Then ensued a long correspondence, which in tone and style was equally discreditable to the Duchess and the dramatist. The Duchess and a friend of hers called Dr. Jackson afterwards supported an unfounded charge against her enemy, which caused him great distress of mind. In the spring of 1777, Foote was a broken man, though up to the last he flashed out occasional whimsicalities. On October 21, he reached Dover, intending to cross to Calais, but the weather prevented this, and he went into the kitchen of the hotel to order a particular dish for dinner. The cook, hearing that he was bound for France, observed that she had never left her native country. "Why, cookey," said Foote, "that is very extraordinary, as they tell me above stairs that you have been several times all over *grease*." "They may say what they please," replied the cook, "but I was never ten miles from Dover in all my life." "Nay," said Foote, "that must be a fib, for I have seen you myself at *Spit*head." The next day he was seized with illness, and died, being then in his fifty-seventh year. The body was removed to Westminster Abbey, and buried by torch-light in the cloisters.

"Foote, from his earthly stage, alas! is hurl'd.
Death *took him off* who *took off* all the world."

Whether he said all the good things which have been attributed to him may be open to question, but it is certain that he said many.

Ever Since Then!

A Song.

WHERE did I meet thee? In garden of roses,
Long 'ere the summer and swallows had flown,
Watching the death of the day as it closes,
Lost in the lilies you wandered alone!
What did I tell thee? I whispered it only,
Breathed "Oh, my darling," in silence of night;
You were so holy and I was so lonely,
I in the darkness and you in the light!

Might on the mountain and light on the fen,
Will you not call to me? come to me? When?
How I have worshipped thee Ever Since Then!

When did I lose thee? One night in December!
Dazed by the darkness and lost in the gloom!
Waiting alone I was left to remember
All the despair of that desolate room!
Where did I leave thee? Once more in the roses,
Kiss'd by the breezes and lull'd by the deep.
There I must wait whilst my darling reposes,
Guarded by angels—in garden of sleep!

Mist on the mountain and night on the fen,
May I not call to thee? come to thee? When?
How I have pray'd for thee Ever Since Then!

C. S.

A First Night, and a Last.

By W. F. Waller.

WITHIN this hour, amid demonstrations at once peculiar to our modern Philistia when its depths are stirred as they have been to-night, and the fountains thereof broken up, and yet phenomenal there, a Queen of Comedy, and eke of Hearts, has laid down for good and all the sceptre which—how ably aided and how loyally there is no need to say—she has so deftly swayed; and so a *régime* which has exercised such influence in things theatrical as is not easy to parallel, and which should influence the stage time to be assuredly none the less by reason of

"The blameless history of twenty years"

it leaves behind—so the Bancroft *régime* has come to an end. A fitting end; no honour wanting; lacking no tribute, nor testimony of feelings warmer than goodwill; but still, alas, an end. As nothing else could do, to us who have seen both, this Omega brings back its Alpha—the time when our Pippo took up play-house for herself, and Alessio was welcoming her troops of friends there in crackling Byronese; when there was never a tinge of grey on her husband's head—it added a pathos of its own to those touching farewell words he spoke to us but now, the evidence of that witness of long work and wear—but he was coming, Hyperion in Jack Crawley's tweeds, to relegate the regulation "juvenile" who oppressed the weary stage at once and for ever to the limbo of such things, when it was Eve of Easter, Sixty-Five, and all the world was young.

So long ago as that? Eheu! they glide away, the years fugacious, and friend Posthumus is apostrophised in vain, and it is for ever yesterday. I lay aside awhile this Act of Abdication, with the *veræ effigies* on its front—the last play-bill that will ever bear the Bancroft *imprimatur*—and I take from yonder drawer an Act of Accession, to wit, this—the first board-bill of "the little house." And lo! it is but yesterday that this old bill was being "set up" at Nowell's (late Peel's)—Nowell is Williams, now, and Strahan; and 74, New Cut, sounds better as 74, Charlotte Street, but the same

press printed the Haymarket posters of to-night—that this old bill was new, and Pippo's venture was the talk of town, and we were pledging it in beakers of the foaming grape of Eastern France, as understood by Mr. Jubber. Alessio was anon to tell us how this adventure was adventured ; and Mrs. Bancroft is to tell us more at length. The dazzling prospect gave her dizziness, it appears. If she had doubts, though I don't think anyone else could conceive any, Pippo was such an idol as a public rarely puts on pedestal. She could go anywhere; she could do anything. Everybody knows, now, what things they were she did. But what a place it was, then, to which she went!—that theatrical Libya about the unsavoury, not to say slummy, Cyrene of Tottenham Street. And what a house it was then she went to! Shades of John Brunton and Louisa Nisbett! Corporeal C. J. Phipps, F.S.A.! What a house! The sometime scene-painter who had had it in his hands, or on his hands, for over a quarter of a century had retained the name the theatre had borne in the time of Louisa of the Laugh aforesaid, and to him, at any rate, it was known as the Queen's. It was known more widely by its fond name of the "Dusthole"—a fond name not vainly imagined, either, as I am able to affirm whom devious and determined playgoing had brought thither, a couple of years before an end was made of it, what time its bills were yellow-and-black—the once familiar blue, so long the house's "colour," dates from 1864, and the brief direction of one of the Sennetts—what time the play was "Aurora Floyd." Ah! The slimy fungosity of that "front circle" where I sat solitary, at one-and-six, with all Whitfield Street at sixpence vociferous below, and all Pitt Street god-like at fourpence overhead, to see Miss Marian Jackson out-Jones the Adelphi Avonia in Aurora. Ah! the glutinous grime that made it literally impossible to tear oneself away from that performance. Ah! the atrociously asphyxiating atmosphere that made it so imperative to begone and live, if one would not stay there and decease. And to think that presently was to come Mr. Bradwell, and that, being come, in three weeks he was to abolish that dusthole, and re-construct, and elegantly decorate, and make a Prince of Wales's of it! "We've only had three weeks to do so much in," Alessio said. And it was just so. The Queen's closed for ever on Saturday, March 18, and its successor opened its doors on Saturday, April 15—three working weeks exactly. That transformation scene which concluded the chief event of the evening was not the only transformation that had

been effected, some thought, nor the only thing "illustrative of Dreamland." The whole thing seemed a dream. Whose "touches of genius" those were which had brought all this about, we have all learned since. The transformation had been so thorough, and was withal so natural to look at, that, as the place was then, so it seemed to have always been; and there was considerable wondering amongst the "Old Guard" from the Strand, who, as a rule, were never *en faction* elsewhere, why nobody had ever heard of Tottenham Street before.

And what an audience it was that filled the transformed house that night, when this old board-bill, crowned with the Prince's plume again, which the old Regency had mounted four-and-fifty years previously, swung new at the portals. How eager! how jubilant! how *young!* For, twenty years ago, twenty years or so was the age of all the world; and in the cheers and laughter of that first night there mingled nothing of that *aliquid amari* which tinged the manifestations of this last. Not, of course, so brilliant and representative an audience as this last night's; with considerable potentialities in it, though, some of which have duly "come off." That "Old Guard" that filled the floor must have gone the way of Cambronne's for the most part, I fancy. Of all the old familiar faces, I could see but two, just now; yet, on this field, or on that it may be trusted to have left its mark. Others there were—of Captain Pen's following, these—who have not failed to score theirs. Chiefly, I can recall that, between the author of the valediction Irving spoke and—*quo locorum*, now, that late Rose?—Falstaffian Sketchley, who never wanted wit, there sat that "source of innocent merriment" called Gilbert, who was then keeping his hand in as the first and only English London correspondent of a Russian journal I ever heard of; whilst prominent there was the "kindly Robertson," who, at hack-work still, but with "Society" in pocket and a gold mine in his brains, was soon to have Society at his beck here, and a portion of his brains, transmuted, at his banker's.

Soon, but not just yet; there is no foretaste of Robertson in my old blue bill. That, of course, was in the nature of things, as things were. Stick to burlesque had been the unanimous advice of all those of Pippo's advisers who were supposed to know best, and who, perhaps, should have known better. For had there not been impersonations at the Strand which pointed in a quite opposite

direction? Aye, verily there had. Lucy Morton, for instance; and that delicious little heroine of "Unlimited Confidence." Still, I don't wonder that these were not allowed to have their due consideration. To have seen Pippo was to believe—if not quite to wish—that she and Byron would go on to the end of time. Anything else was discountenanced as too risky. Stick to burlesque and H. J. B., that was the way to best please the new public, as it had been the most infallible way to please the old. How differently all this was to turn out. Burlesque, which lived in Tottenham Street through "Society," and lingered there through "Ours," was killed outright there by "Caste." Byron went to Liverpool and lost a fortune. And, one December day, a *dénouement* not contemplated by the author was given to "How She Loves Him;" and the Bancroft management was inaugurated in due form.

But to speak by the bill. That bill must have seemed as strange to the old Queen's *habitués* as the aspect of the new interior, with its drawing-room air, its pretty hangings, its speckless paper, its fresh paint, and those rows of antimacassared chairs. Two-guinea boxes, six-shilling stalls, refreshments by Epitaux—here were things! How long would these things last? Well, the management's banking account must have been run pretty close by this time; a dust-hole is not to be turned into a drawing-room for nothing. Still, if any misgivings did arise, they must speedily have been dissipated. For nothing in the world succeeds like success.

The title of John Pratt Wooler's piece—"a poor thing, but not at all his own," as a cynic was heard to remark—at the top of the bill was prophetic. A "Winning Hazard" it was. Mr. Wooler's little play, which was, I think, the first and last of his that was given at the Prince of Wales's during the brief remainder of the author's life, though a posthumous act, signed by him, was done there later. This "Winning Hazard" will always have an historic interest for a good many people, by reason of the fact that it served to introduce to his first London audience the actor who to-night has taken farewell of what may e'en be his last. When "Mr. Sidney Bancroft, from the Prince of Wales's, Liverpool," strolled up those "eternal grounds" of Colonel Croker's, and came into view, he gave us to behold that to which we had been long strangers. He was, that is to say, exactly what a *jeune premier* ought to be, and precisely what a *jeune premier* of those days was not. Mien,

manner, dress, diction, figure, "form"—the personage was complete. He was on the stage twenty minutes, perhaps; but he remains the distinctive feature of that evening in my recollection still. Frederick Dewar and Dyas were in the piece; the first a remarkable all-round actor, who, as the Doctor, made the fortune of the St. James's version of "Nos Intimes," and who was presently going to interpret Byron's Count Rodolpho.

> "A mixture of the erudite philosopher
> Manfred, The Stranger, and a sheriff's ossifer";

the last a gentleman who was said to be content to go down to posterity as the progenitor of Miss Ada Dyas.

Then came the piece of the evening, an H. J. B. version of the "Sonnambula." Mr. James the younger's new act-drop went up on a pretty scene. He had as pretty a talent for this work. He lived just long enough to paint the decorations for the first three Robertsonian comedies, and for Boucicault's fiasco, which preceded "Play." But when the scenery was wanted for "Play" it was Hawes Craven who supplied it, for the man who painted the first, and, to my mind, always the most characteristic "little house in Stangate," was dying.

But they are all alive yonder in the village of Tra-la-la. Down the rock comes Alessio. How we welcome her to her new house! How the pleasant fooling speeds with her, and Clarke and others, all past masters! By-and-by, Clarke plays us out with the old farce, and this first night ended as it began, with laughter. There has been laughter to-night, and no lack, but this is Omega and not Alpha—not greeting, but good-bye. To good-bye it comes at last The long defile of "all the talents" end. Peg has played what may be her last part, and her stage mark has slipped a little more than once. Irving has spoken with perfect grace the graceful valedictory verse. And now Triplet comes to say good-bye in his proper person, it is said; and then the whole house rises, for there is Peg beside him. Hand-in-hand they join, and so the curtain falls upon them as they stand together between the banks of flowers. And so, farewell! *Valete! Plaudimus.*

July 20, 1885.

Our Musical-Box.

MADAME ADELINE PATTI has saved the London musical season of 1885 from the reproach with which it was threatened only a few weeks ago, viz., that it should pass away unenlivened by Italian Opera. Nothing short of the supreme attraction offered by her singing and acting could have justified an *impresario* in organising a series of operatic performances at Covent Garden the expenses of which probably exceed £1,000 a night; for experience has sufficiently convinced Messrs. Mapleson and Gye that no other *prima donna* is capable of drawing remunerative audiences to either of our great opera houses. Madame Patti, however, may be as confidently relied upon now as of yore to fill every seat in the "Garden" at what the Germans call "Hohe Preise"; indeed, I have reason to believe that the management took £1,600 on the occasion of her appearance in the part of Margharita—a fact which implies the payment by the public of at least £400 premium on the advertised prices of admission. What wonder that the elect of the richest city in Europe should compete for places wherein they may enjoy the privilege of listening to the finest singer in the world? Such, beyond a doubt, is Adelina Patti; her superiority to all other living vocalists was never more conclusively established than during the past month, in the course of which—despite a lingering cold, caught on her journey from Craig-y-Nos to London, and which she has been unable to shake off—she has sustained several heavy parts with unique efficiency, charm and brilliancy, including her revival of "Linda di Chamounix," an inimitable performance, and her *début* in the title *rôle* of Bizet's "Carmen." It is of these two feats that I would speak more particularly, Madame Patti's unrivalled impersonations of Violetta, Semiramide, Marta, and Margharita being so familiar to the London musical public that the readers of The Theatre are as fully awake to their transcendent merits as I can possibly be. But "Linda" has not been given in London for a good many years; like the "Gazza Ladra" it has somehow or other dropped out of our operatic *répertoire*, much to the regret of those who prefer sweet tunes to "endless melody," and vocal to orchestral narrative. The difficult but grateful part of Carmen, on the other hand, has been variously rendered in London by four accomplished *cantatrici*—Mesdames Minnie Hauk, Trebelli, Marie Roze, and Selina Dolaro—each excellent in her way; and the fact that Merimée's fascinating gipsy was so well known to us under different aspects enhanced the curiosity felt by operagoers as to the view of Carmen which would be taken by the Queen of Song. Four years ago I urged Madame Patti to study the part, which I considered peculiarly qualified to display her dramatic abilities to the greatest

advantage ; but at that time she appeared to entertain strong objections to it, happily surmounted within the past twelvemonth. It has now been added to her *répertoire*, of which it will continue to be a feature, I doubt not, until the close of her public career.

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The revival of "Linda di Chamounix" came off at Covent Garden Theatre on July 11. As far as scenery, costumes and appointments were concerned, the opera was thriftily produced ; but the cast, with one painful exception, was a good one, the orchestra, though sometimes a little too loud, fulfilled its task on the whole satisfactorily, the chorists sang far better than they looked, and the performance, from first to last, was eminently praiseworthy. Linda is an exceptionally onerous part, abounding in technical difficulties, and calling for no small amount of sheer physical exertion on the part of the artist sustaining it. In the second act she has to take her share of three long florid duets in succession, and to go mad in a very fatiguing way when her aged father, whose necessities she relieves with a handsome donation of somebody else's money, rewards her kindness by cursing her with extraordinary vehemence. Towards the close of the opera, moreover, she undergoes a great deal of exertion whilst laboriously recovering her senses, of which an ungrateful parent had bereft her ; whilst the first act, with its elaborate *aria* "O luce di quest' anima" and scarcely less intricate duet between Linda and Pierotto—a *chef d'œuvre* of its class—exacts a heavy tribute from the vocal resources of even so lavishly-gifted a singer as Adelina Patti. She paid it, however, and twice over (in obedience to an imperative *encore*) to the last note, with a fullness and ease no less wonderful than admirable. I have seen it written that her voice has lost its velvety richness and has diminished in compass ; that her intonation is no longer infallible ; that the quality of her upper register has deteriorated ; and that her feats of execution cost her manifest effort. All these statements are absolutely untrue. Throughout her performance of Linda, at which I was present, her voice was as rich and round as I ever heard it ; she sang every note of her part perfectly in tune ; and her *fioriture* were produced with the spontaneity that characterises the warbling of a thrush. In a word, she has never sung more exquisitely or had her marvellous vocal powers more thoroughly under command than upon the occasion referred to ; nor do I remember to have seen her act with more sprightliness, dramatic force and touching pathos. What a treat it was to hear her sing the great duet in the first act with Mdme. Scalchi, whose vocalisation was as irreproachable as her own, and to listen, just before the curtain fell, to her unrivalled delivery of "Home, Sweet Home!" Of the mawkish, quavering tenor who was cast for Carlo, Linda's noble lover, the less said the better ; but it would be unfair to pass over in silence the spirited and tuneful singing of Signor Caracciolo, a *buffo* of the good old school, such as we seldom encounter in these degenerate days.

July 14, 1885, will be memorable in operatic annals as the date of Adelina Patti's *début* in "Carmen"—indisputably the most interesting musical event of the season. The part afforded her but little scope for the display of her splendid vocal powers. Whatever could be done with it in the way of making "points," she did, of course; but the music is too low for her voice, and does not contain a single genuine bravura passage, such as the great *prima donna* delights in, and renders with inimitable *slancio*. But from a dramatic point of view her impersonation of Carmen ranks amongst her most eminent achievements, and embodies perhaps the finest conception of that character hitherto developed by any actress upon the operatic stage. The Carmen of Adelina Patti is a reckless fatalist, conscious of the doom awaiting her, but almost fiercely resolved to abstain from any endeavour to avert her gloomy fate, just because she is immovably convinced that it is decreed and unavoidable. Her outward demeanour is gay to the verge of frivolity—her conduct is indefensible from a conventionally moral point of view; but, under all her tricksiness and sensuality you see the blight with which a foreknowledge (real or imaginary) of her Destiny has stricken her. Madame Patti rose to a great height of tragic power in the Card Scene and the final catastrophe. Throughout the whole opera her by-play was extraordinarily interesting, by reason of the subtle and restless intelligence that pervaded it. She introduced a good deal of new and highly-effective "business," more particularly into the first and second acts, and was heart and soul in her *rôle* from first to last. M. Engel acted Don José very forcibly and impressively; unfortunately, his singing was chronically unpleasant on account of its tremulousness. Del Puente was excellent as Escamillo; nobody could sing or act the part better. The performances of the stout person who was cast for Micaela—such a lovely part, too!—were beneath criticism; all the minor *rôles*, moreover, were inefficiently filled. But Madame Patti's brilliant presentment of the wayward, changeful, merry, amorous, ireful and despairing Gitana compensated an appreciative audience for all the management's manifold shortcomings.

One of my earliest musical remembrances, dating from no matter how many years ago, is a series of performances of Haendel's oratorios at Exeter Hall, at which I was permitted to be present in reward of the assiduity I had displayed in studying the soprano *soli* in more than one of those stupendous works. The impression made upon me by the "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt," which I then heard for the first time, and which revealed to me a limitless supernatural world of ineffable beauty and surpassing grandeur, has never been effaced; those two oratorios have always seemed to me supreme achievements of human genius. Since that time I have heard them over and over again, in Germany as well as in England, for the most part excellently rendered by orchestras of from eighty to a hundred and twenty executants, and choirs varying between two and six hundred singers in strength. But until the present

summer I had never had an opportunity of attending a Haendel Festival at the Crystal Palace, and consequently had no notion of the extraordinary sublimity that could be imparted to certain of the choruses in the works with which I was so familiar, by the simple expedient of accumulating vocal and instrumental force for their interpretation. Having listened, awestricken and enraptured, to "Israel in Egypt," as it was given at Sydenham a few weeks ago under the direction of Mr. Manns, I do not hesitate to say that I look back to that performance as the most surprising and momentous musical event of my life. As a spectacle, it surpassed in grandeur and impressiveness anything I had theretofore seen; as a sound-effect, there is, so far as I know, nothing comparable with it in the universe. A thousand tenors, singing in unison and perfectly in tune, produce a tone of quite indescribable breadth and warmth, and so, indeed, do similar masses of bass and alto voices; whilst the shrill force of a thousand *soprani*, delivering the top notes of their upper register *fortissimo*, is—or at least proved to be, as far as I was concerned—absolutely overpowering. Not less tremendous is the effect upon the nerves of the instrumental legions in the orchestra; for instance, of the gigantic notes emitted by sixty double-basses, and of the ripe, rich tone, stirring the very heart-strings and unlocking the flood-gates of the eyes, given out by a hundred first violins. What avails it to write mere words about such ineffable sensations? I sat in that vast glass house dumb and subdued, one of seven and twenty thousand as silent and overcome as myself—completely under the spell of the master and his sonorous hosts, and inwardly startled by the depth of the emotion that, for the time being, absolutely overpowered me. Had the high heavens opened above my head and disclosed their resplendent secrets, I should scarcely have been surprised. Haendel, thus interpreted, exorcises the spiritual part of a man from his prosaic body, and makes everything extra-natural seem possible to him. What music! and what a rendering! It is the wonder of the world!

If I had ever entertained a serious doubt of the inborn musicality of the English people, what I saw and heard at the Haendel Festival would have set my mind at ease upon that much-disputed point, at once and for all my time to come. I do not say that the feats there achieved could not be executed in Germany, which country teems with good choirs and accomplished instrumentalists; I only say that they are not, and have not been within my recollection. The Germans are a musical people, if there be such a thing; they do not fail to impress that fact upon the stranger within their gates; during my twelve years' residence in the Fatherland my friends and acquaintances amongst the natives were never weary of assuring me that, being an Englishman, I could not possibly have any taste for or understanding of music, that being the peculiar privilege of the Teutonic race. But, deeply versed though they unquestionably are in the divine art, the Germans do not get together orchestras six hundred strong, and choirs numbering from four to five thousand trained singers, in order to perform Haendel's oratorios to audiences as numerous as the soldiers of a German army-corps at full war-strength. This is a purely

English achievement, and tells its own story, as far as the musical instinct and cultivation of this people are concerned. So does the pure intonation of British vocalists, a musical virtue which is the exception rather than the rule in Germany, where I have heard more singing out of tune—and rapturously applauded, too—than in all the other countries of Europe put together. None but English chorists, I do not hesitate to say, could sing the intricate chorus of "Israel in Egypt" so perfectly as do the town and country legions that take part in the Haendel Festivals—that is to say, at such brief notice and with so few rehearsals. And I challenge Germany, Italy and France to produce the equal of Mr. Edward Lloyd as a lyric tenor. We cannot boast of great pianists or violinists, indigenous to this soil and living at the present time; but our oratorio and concert-room vocal soloists are as superior in every respect to those of the Fatherland as Guinness's Double Stout is to Berlin *Export-Bier*. Where, indeed, throughout the length and breadth of the Continent, can be found available in any one city such perfect singers of the class in question as Miss Davies, Mrs. Patey, Mrs. Fonblanque-Campbell, Messrs. Lloyd, Maas, and Foley? Englishmen may indeed be proud of their right to claim such consummate artists as their compatriots, and to base their pretensions to national musicality upon so solid and enduring a foundation as the sublime and inimitable Haendel Festivals.

Taking up my parable of the "Concerts of the Season" where I left it in the "Musical Box" of last month, I am glad to say that the Benedict benefit at Drury Lane thoroughly fulfilled its splendid promise, and yielded a satisfactory pecuniary result. An interesting event was the entertainment given in Mrs. George Peck's pretty *salons*, at 26, Chesham Place, by the Paggi family, in which the veteran flautist and his clever daughters distinguished themselves by a liberal display of their "excellent differences," musical and declamatory. They were, moreover, strongly supported by two of the most charming concert-room vocalists of the day—Signorina Alice Barbi and Mdlle. Delphine Le Brun—whose admirable singing drew plentiful plaudits from a crowded and fashionable audience. Mr. Kuhe's annual grand *matinée* at St. James's Hall teemed with "great attractions," the most memorable of which was the *début* as a public singer of Mdlle. Trebelli, whose fresh voice and dainty execution made a very favourable impression upon her audience. In Donizetti's famous duet, "Oh! figlia, incanta," mother and daughter—*mater pulchra, filia pulchrior*—achieved a great and perfectly legitimate triumph. Henry Irving made our flesh creep with "Eugene Aram's Dream,' Isidore de Lara enchanted us by singing two of his charming songs as no one but himself can sing them, Vittorio Carpi contributed brilliant renderings of "O Lisbona" and "Largo al Factotum," Jack Robertson warbled a delightful ballad by Tosti, and Madame Neruda played three soli in her very best manner, than which there is none better. Mr. Kuhe's "clients" had good and sufficient reason for their evident satisfaction with the quality as well as quantity of the afternoon's entertainment so lavishly provided for them.

The chief novelty produced at Isidore de Lara's "Annual," which came off, as usual, with extraordinary *éclat*, at the Princes' Hall, was a "Boat Song" (solo and chorus of female voices) by the concert-giver, which met with an extremely cordial reception. Mrs. Lynedoch-Moncrieff contributed several songs to the programme, rendered in the sympathetic mezza-voce and semi-indolent manner that are conspicuous amongst her many attractive specialities; and Madame Antoinette Sterling, arrayed in a dressing-gown of extraordinary splendour, obtained a well-merited encore for her fine broad rendering of Molloy's "Old Sweet Song." Of De Lara's singing, which, after all, constituted the charm that crowded the huge hall in Piccadilly with *grandes dames de par le monde* at the height of the season, I can only say it is a thing, *per se*, to me and to countless other music-lovers exquisitely gratifying. On the occasion referred to, he held his audience spell-bound by his magnificent rendering of "To the Palms"—the finest work he has as yet produced—of Caracciolo's lovely "Alas!" Tosti's passionate "Aprile," and two of Faure's inimitable *chansons*, besides other compositions of exceeding beauty. At Herr Carl Bernhard's concert, given in the Steinway Hall, the *bénéficiaire* sang Schubert's "Erl Koenig" very forcibly and impressively, and was no less successful in Rossini's celebrated *aria buffa* "Il mio piano é preparato." Little Pauline Ellice played the first movement of Weber's brilliant Concerto in G with amazing steadiness and accuracy; and a new work by Leonhard Bach, hight "Carols of Cradleland," sung by Miss Farren, established itself unmistakably in public favour. The Carols are five in number—sprightly and graceful verses, indited to the honour and glory of "Baby the King," by Mr. Horace Lennard, and set to music with infinite tenderness by the young Russian pianist who has achieved such remarkable popularity in London during the past season. "Our Baby" and "Santa Claus" appeal irresistibly to the heart of every "fond parent," and cannot fail to become household songs throughout a country in which infant-worship is the national cultus. The little songs, in a word, are simply delicious, and I can confidently recommend them to adoring mammas and infatuated maiden-aunts. Mr. Charles Wade's *matinée* at Princes' Hall deserves mention for its giver's able rendering of Dvórâk's beautiful Gipsy-Songs, for Madame Neruda's fine playing of Léclair's "Sarabande and Tambourin," and for Mrs. Hutchinson's graceful interpretation of three charming lyrics, by Jensen, Gounod, and Massenet. Herr Neruda's 'cello was also an agreeable feature of this well-selected and refreshingly brief programme.

Signor Vittorio Carpi, whose earlier successes were duly recorded in the foregoing number of The Theatre, attracted a brilliant gathering to Mrs. Wallace Carpenter's pretty house in Ashley Place on the 6th ult. Conspicuously patronised by British Royalty, which has acknowledged his talents with tasteful munificence, this vigorous and vivacious singer has every reason to be gratified by the cordiality of his reception, publicly and privately, in this metropolis. His concert was really a social "event," and he performed his share of it with unflagging spirit.

It was his great good fortune, moreover, to be assisted by Alice Barbi, whose perfect singing made a deep impression upon all present, by De Lara, never heard to greater advantage than in Tosti's tender "Ricordati di me" and his own fascinating "Mine To-day," and by that excellent violinist Guerini, who I rejoice to say has at length returned *pour tout de bon* to London from his abode by the sad sea wave. Signor Carpi will carry back to Italy many precious souvenirs of his sojourn in this city, including golden opinions of all manner of men. He intends to repeat his visit next May. Mdlle. Thérèse Castellan also gave her Annual Concert on July 5, at Lady Goldsmid's, and scored a success of the first order. Her execution is as crisp and feathery as ever, and few violinists of the coarser sex produce so broad and mellow a tone as this gifted young lady, whom I cordially congratulate upon her latest acquisition—an instrument of extraordinary power and sweetness. De Lara and Mario Costa sang their very best for her, and she was discreetly accompanied by Signor Gelli, a highly meritorious pianist, in one of Corelli's incomparable violin sonatas, which could not possibly have been better played. Another interesting concert was that given by Mdme. Friggeri, a *cantatrice* of the sound old school of vocalisation in which Mesdames Patti and Scalchi were trained, at the Steinway Hall on the 8th of last month, under distinguished patronage. The honours of this *matinée* were divided amongst the concert-giver, Mdlle. Le Brun and Mr. de Lara. Mdme. Friggeri did full justice to three graceful *canzoni* by Denza, Scontrino and Manzocchi, and to the principal *aria* in Mozart's "Nozze di Figaro." A sympathetic little song called "Tell Her" was charmingly sung by Mdlle. Le Brun, and De Lara contributed "I Love Thee!" with his accustomed fervour, warming up a somewhat frigid audience to momentary enthusiasm. To another of Mdme. Friggeri's vocal assistants, Mr. Alfred Bancroft, a celebrated aphorism pronounced some years ago by Mark Twain was eminently applicable. Alas, there are concert-room singers of whom Dante must have been thinking when he wrote "Non ragioniam di lor', ma taci e passa."

At his second and last concert, given in St. James's Hall on July 10, the Chevalier L. E. Bach played Beethoven's Concerto in C minor with consummate ability, taste, and good feeling, and introduced to public notice a clever composition of his own for P.F. and orchestra, intituled "Capriccio Polonais." A young American lady, Miss Medora Henson, made her *début* as a dramatic vocalist in Randegger's powerful *scena* "Medea," and was rewarded for a performance of unusually high quality by loud and prolonged applause. Madame Antoinette Sterling's rendering of Herr Bach's "Carols of Cradleland," to which I have already called attention, was so beautiful alike in delivery and expression that two of the four numbers she selected from the "cyklus" were unanimously re-demanded. The concert concluded with a couple of excerpts from Arthur Sullivan's delightful incidental music to the "Tempest," capitally played by Mr. Randegger's well-balanced little orchestra. If all entertainments of this character were as intrinsically good as that of Herr Bach, the

musical critic's task would be a far pleasanter one than it usually is during the laborious month of July. By the way, at a concert given for some charitable purpose in Princes' Hall on the 14th ult. Madame Macchetta d'Allegri (Blanche Roosevelt, the author of "Stage Struck"), Miss Millicent Dremel, Madame Hughes Palzer, Mr. Frank Baxter, and some other distinguished musical amateurs entertained a fashionable audience extremely well, with the aid of Mrs. Barrymore (a comic reciter of the first water), Mr. de Lara, and the indefatigable Chevalier Bach. Neuler's pretty duet "Moonlight on the Rhine," sung with admirable finish by Madame d'Allegri and Mr. Baxter, was a leading feature of this interesting *matinée*, in which Messrs. Harper Kearton and Neville Hughes also figured as vocalists. On the same afternoon Signorina Alice Barbi's concert took place at Lady Goldsmid's house in Piccadilly, the *salons* of which were thronged by the "first flight" of London society. The Signorina sang to perfection, as she always does, sweet old-fashioned Italian ditties and fervent Lieder by Schubert and Schumann; she was brilliantly supported by Miss Elliott and Signori Carpi, Albanese and Guerini. Before closing the unconscionably long series of my concert-notices for July, I must be permitted to express my unqualified admiration of the high musical culture and executant versatility displayed by Signor Cesi in the course of his P.F. Recital on the 15th ult. This excellent artist plays the music of all schools and periods with equal intelligence and facility. This programme included compositions by Mozart, Bach, Scarlatti, Haendel, Clementi, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Thalberg, Liszt, and Rubinstein, one and all of which he rendered in a masterly manner. Few contemporary pianists can outvie him in *technique*, and his playing reveals all the finer musicianly qualities. Signor Cesi does honour to the modern school of Italian pianism, in which he may claim a foremost place—side by side with Sgambati.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

Our Play-Box.

"OLIVIA."

A Play, in Four Acts by W. G. Wills, founded on an episode in "The Vicar of Wakefield." Revived at the Lyceum Theatre on Wednesday, May 27, 1885.

Dr. Primrose	Mr. Henry Irving.	Farmer Flamborough ...	Mr. H. Howe.
Moses	Mr. Norman Forbes.	Mrs. Primrose	Miss L. Payne.
Dick	Miss F. Holland.	Olivia	Miss Ellen Terry.
Bill	Miss M. Holland	Sophia	Miss Winifred Emery.
Mr. Burchell	Mr. T. N. Wenman.	Polly Flamborough ...	Miss Coleridge.
Squire Thornhill	Mr. W. Terriss.	Phœbe	Miss Mills.
Leigh	Mr. F. Tyars.	Gipsy Woman	Miss Barnett.

It has sometimes been thought that the acting of Mr. Irving is seen at its best in those impersonations of his which derive their vitality from the grim, ghastly, and morbid attributes of human nature. That he is an unique actor, and distinctively a great actor, in portions of Hamlet, and in all of Mathias, Eugene Aram, Louis XI, and Dubosc,

few judges will feel inclined to deny. His performances of those parts have shown him to be a man of weird imagination, and they have shown that his characteristics, mental and spiritual, are sad and sombre. Accordingly, when it was announced that he would play Dr. Primrose—Goldsmith's simple, virtuous, homely, undramatic village-preacher, out of the "Vicar of Wakefield"—a doubt was elt as to his suitability for the part, and as to the success of his endeavour. He has played Dr. Primrose, and he has gained, in this character, some of the brightest laurels of his professional career. The doubt proves to have been unwarranted. More than one competent observer of this remarkable performance has granted it an equal rank with the best of Mr. Irving's achievements; and now, more clearly than before, it is preceived that the current of his inspiration flows as reely from the silver spring of goodness as from the dark and troubled fountain of human misery.

On the first night of "Olivia," at the Lyceum Theatre (it was the 27th of May, and this piece has been acted there ever since to full houses), Mr. Irving's performance of Dr. Primrose was marred by a tinge of constraint. The actor's nerves had been strained to a high pitch of excitement, and he was obviously anxious. His spirit, accordingly, was not fully liberated into the character. He advanced with cautious care, and he executed each detail of his design with a precise accuracy that was almost painful. To various auditors, for this reason, the work seemed a little Methodistical; and drab is a colour at which the voice of the scoffer is extremely apt to scoff. It seems worth while to mention the existence of this impression, in order to say that all cause for its existence has long since disappeared. No trace of effort can now be discerned in Mr. Irving's impersonation. It has become equally a triumph of expression and ideal; for it not only flows out of goodness, but flows smoothly, and produces the perfect effect of nature. It is not absolutely and identically the Vicar that Goldsmith has drawn, for its personality is unmarked by either sturdiness, rusticity, or strong humour; but it is a kindred and higher type of the simple truth, the pastoral sweetness, the benignity, and the human tenderness of that delightful original. To invest goodness with charm, and, in a drama presenting but slender opportunities, to make virtue piquant, and to turn common events of domestic life to exquisite pathos and noble exaltation, was the actor's purpose. It has been accomplished; and Dr. Primrose, hitherto an idyllic figure, existent only in the chambers of fancy, is henceforth as much a denizen of the stage as Luke Fielding or Jesse Rural; a man not merely to be read of, as one reads of Uncle Toby and Parson Adams, but to be seen, and known, and loved.

Mr. Wills's drama of "Olivia," based upon an episode in Goldsmith's story, is one of extreme simplicity. It may be described, not unjustly, as a series of pictures, displaying the consequences of action rather than action itself. It contains an abundance of

incident, but the incident is mostly devoid of inherent dramatic force, and therefore is such as must derive its chief effect from the manner in which it is treated by the actors who represent the piece. Nevertheless it is found to be, during its first three acts, an expressive, coherent, interesting play. It tells its story clearly and entirely, not by narrative but by the display of characters in their relations to each other. Its language, flavoured here and there with the phraseology of the novel, is consistently appropriate. The fourth and last act, it must be allowed, is feeble, almost insipid. Nobody can sympathise with "the late remorse of love" in a nature so trivial and base as that of Thornhill, and the incident of the reconciliation between Olivia and her husband, therefore, goes for nothing. It is the beautiful relation between the father and his daughter that animates this play. It is paternal love that thrills its whole structure with light, warmth, colour, sincerity, moral force, and human significance. Opinions differ as to the degree of skill with which Mr. Wills has selected and employed the materials of Goldsmith's story; but nobody can justly deny that he has wrought for the stage a practical dramatic exposition of the beauty and sanctity of the holiest relation that is possible in human life. This, at any rate, he has done; and to have done this is to have done a noble thing.

Many persons appear to think that criticism falls short of its duty unless it wounds and hurts. Goldsmith himself observed this fact. It was in this very story of "The Vicar of Wakefield" that he made his well-known playful suggestion that a critic should always take care to say that the picture would have been better if the painter had taken more pains. Mr. Wills is quite likely to hear of the faults of his piece—probably has heard of them, more than enough for his spiritual welfare. There is really nothing weak in his play except the conclusion—which obviously flags. It is not easy to suggest, however, in what way the fourth act could be strengthened, unless it were by a complete re-casting and renovation of the character of Squire Thornhill. But the victory has been gained, in spite of the feeble climax. Many persons also appear to think that it is a sort of sacrilege to lay hands upon the sacred art of a classic creation. Mr. Boucicault, perceiving this when he made his play of "Clarissa Harlowe," felt moved to deprecate anticipated public resentment of the liberties that he had taken with Richardson's novel. Yet it is difficult to see why the attendant details of that excellent though protracted narrative should not be curtailed, in order to circumscribe its substance within the limits of a practicable drama. Mr. Jefferson was censured for condensing and slightly changing the comedy of "The Rivals." Yet it is certain that the author, who probably knew something about his work, deemed it a wretchedly defective piece, and expressed the liveliest regret for having written it. Mr. Wills has not reproduced Goldsmith's "Vicar" upon the stage, but in some particulars has widely diverged from it. Protest on this point is quite unlikely to be dumb. Yet "The Vicar of Wakefield" is far

from being a faultless production, or one that a divinity should be supposed to hedge. Critical students of such matters are well aware of this. It is not worth while to traverse the old ground. Any reader who will take the trouble—and pleasure—to refer to that excellent chapter on Goldsmith in Dr. Craik's "History of English Literature" will find the structural defects of the novel specifically enumerated. If the dramatist has ignored many details he has, at least, extracted from the narrative the delicate points of a consistent, harmonious story. The spectator can enjoy this play, whether he has read the original or not. At the end of Act 1 he knows the Vicar and his family, their home, their way of life, their neighbours, the two suitors for the two girls, the motives of each and every character, and the relations of each to all; and he sees, what is always so touching in the spectacle of actual human life, the contrasted states of circumstance and experience surrounding and enriching all. After this preparation the story is developed with few and rapid strokes.

Two of the pictures that constitute this piece are poems. At the end of Act 1, the vicar, who has been apprised of the loss of his property, imparts this sad news to his family. The time is the gloaming. The chimes are sounding in the church-tower. It is the hour of evening prayer. The grey-haired pastor calls his dear ones around him, in his garden, and simply and reverently tells them of their misfortune, which is to be accepted submissively, as Heaven's will. The deep religious feeling of this scene, the grouping, the use of sunset lights and shadows, the melody of the chimes, the stricken look in the faces of the women and children, the sweet gravity of the vicar—instinct with the nobleness of a sorrow not yet become corrosive and lachrymose, as is the tendency of settled grief—and, over all, the sense of blighted happiness and an uncertain future, make up a dramatic as well as a pictorial effect of most impressive poetic significance. Again, in Act 2—which is pictorial almost without intermission—there is a companion picture, where the vicar reads, at his fireside, a letter announcing the restitution of his estate; while his wife and children and Mr. Burchell are assembled around the spinet and singing an old song. The repose with which Mr. Irving has made this scene tremulous and almost painful, in its suspense, will be observed as one of the happiest strokes of his art. The face and demeanour of Dr. Primrose, changing from the composure of resignation to a startled surprise, and then to almost an hysterical gladness, present a study not less instructive than affecting of the resources of dramatic art. Only two contemporary actors have presented work commensurate with Mr. Irving's acting in this situation and throughout the scene that is sequent on the discovery of Olivia's flight—Jefferson in America, and Coquelin in France.

Evil is restless, and irresistibly prone to action. Goodness is usually negative and inert. Dr. Primrose is a type of goodness, and he is nothing else. In order to invest him with piquancy and

dramatic vigour Mr. Irving has given him passion, and therewithal various attributes of charming eccentricity. This clergyman thus presented is the fruition of a long life of virtue. He has the complete repose of innocence, the sweet candour of absolute purity, the mild demeanour of spontaneous and habitual benevolence, the supreme grace of unconscious simplicity. But he is human and passionate; he shows—in his surroundings, in his quick sympathy with natural beauty, and in his indicated rather than directly stated ideals of conduct—that he has lived an imaginative and not a prosaic life; he is vaguely and pathetically superstitious; and while essentially grand in his religious magnanimity, he is both fascinating and formidable as a man. These denotements point at Mr. Irving's ideal. For his execution it is far less easy to find the right descriptive words. His mechanical reiteration of the words that are said to him by Sophia, in the moment when the fond father knows that his idolised Olivia has fled with her lover; his collapse when the harmless old pistols are taken from his nerveless old hands; his despairing cry, "If she had but died!"; his abortive effort to rebuke his darling child, in the hour of her abandonment and misery, and the sudden tempest of passionate affection with which the great, tender heart sweeps away this inadequate and paltry, though eminently appropriate morality, and takes its idol to itself as only true love can do—these are instances of high dramatic achievement for which epithets are inadequate, but which the memory of the heart will always treasure.

It was said by the old poet, Aaron Hill, in allusion to Barton Booth, that the blind might have seen him in his voice and the deaf might have heard him in his visage. Such a statement made concerning any actor now-a-days would doubtless be deemed extravagant. But, turning now from the Vicar to his cherished daughter, this felicitous image comes, naturally enough, into the mind To think of Ellen Terry as Olivia will always be to recall one especial and remarkable moment of beauty and tenderness. It is not her distribution of the farewell gifts, on the eve of Olivia's flight —full although that be of the emotion of a good heart torn and tortured by the conflict between love and duty—and it is not the desperate resentment with which Olivia beats back her treacherous betrayer, when, at the climax of his baseness, he adds insult to criminal, heartless perfidy. These, indeed, are made great situations by the profound sincerity and the rich, woman-like passion of the actress. But there is one little instant, in the second act of the play, when the woman's heart has at length yielded to her lover's will, and he himself, momentarily dismayed by his own conquest, strives to turn back, that Ellen Terry has made pathetic beyond description. The words she speaks are simply these:—"But I said I would come!" What words shall do justice to the voice, to the manner, to the sweet, confiding, absolute abandonment of the whole nature to the human love by which it has been

conquered? The whole of this performance is astonishing, is thrilling, with the knowledge that it displays of the passion of love. This is the supreme beauty of it. At such moments human nature is irradiated with a divine fire, and art fulfils its purpose.

Mr. Terriss has never acted so well, within the knowledge of the present writer, as he does in the character of Squire Thornhill. Dissolute selfishness and peevish animal gaiety could not, surely, be more exactly expressed than they are by this actor in the scene of Thornhill's avowal of his perfidy towards his victim; while, in the early scenes, the indications of a sensual temperament, a narrow, conceited mind, and a life of pleasure and profligacy are given with extraordinary ease and fidelity. It is rare that a character so unlovely is depicted with such vigour and truth.

William Winter.

"THE FAITHFULL SHEPERDESSE."

John Fletcher's Pastoral Play, acted in the grounds of Coombe House, on Saturday afternoon, June 27, 1885.

Perigot	Lady Archibald Campbell.	Sullen Shepherd ...	Mr. Hermann Vezin.
Theniot	Mr. R. de Cordova.	Hobinal	Miss M. Bigwood.
Daphnis	Mr. E. Rose.	Amoret	Prineess Hellen of Kapurthala.
Alexis	Mr. G. Wade.		
Satyr	Mr. W. G. Elliot.	Clorin	Lady E. Spencer Churchill.
Priest	Mr. Bindloss.	Amarillis	Mrs. George Batten.
Old Shepherd	Lord E. Spencer Churchill.	Cloe	Miss Lucy Roche.

THERE were some things in the recent performances of Fletcher's "Faithfull Sheperdesse" in the grounds of Coombe House which merit the highest praise; there were others which merit and must receive a moderate amount of censure. So much in general terms; we shall come to detail presently. The choice of the play must be pronounced a happy one. These worthy players, styling themselves Pastoral, and, out of regard for the conditions of their performances, choosing only to interpret plays to which that title is appropriated, of necessity restrict their efforts to a somewhat narrow field. The range of the English pastoral drama is not extensive. Pastoral comedy is in its essence of a more artificial character than comedy of any other type—artificial as all types of stage comedy are—and the number of comic writers who have made successful ventures into the realms of Pan is very small. But poets without end, all of them looking back to Theocritus, have had yearnings towards the classical; and John Fletcher—partner Beaumont not being with him in this attempt—did once, like the rest, steer his bark to Thessaly. From that voyage of fancy he returned and wrote "The Faithfull Sheperdesse."

The play has been variously handled by English and foreign critics. German Schlegel damns it roundly as an "immodest eulogy of chastity," missing in his verdict something of that "Olympian politeness" which Mr. Matthew Arnold so much admired in Goethe, and which he claims as a note of all true criticism. Lamb, whose delicate critical faculty was seldom liable to be clouded by prejudice, would

have given it greater praise had not his gorge risen at Cloe, whose style in the original is certainly luxuriant. Hazlitt, whose shrewd wit scarcely ever carried him to the heart of things, mingles praise and blame in this instance fairly enough. As pastoral plays go, "The Faithfull Sheperdesse" is on the whole a good one. In some respects it is very good indeed, in others it is as distinctly poor. It has most of the virtues along with many of the faults of all Fletcher's work, or of the work of Beaumont and Fletcher together. Fletcher's rustics are certainly more real than those priggish bucolics of Spenser who talk second-rate theology in third-rate English; they have more life in them than Pope's shepherds, and assuredly not less actuality than Milton's, whose "Comus," indeed, has much that belongs of right to Fletcher. The lyrical strains of "The Faithfull Sheperdesse" are always charming and sometimes exquisite. We miss the aërial grace and lightness of the fairy scenes in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," though Fletcher contrives to move with no little freedom in the element of the preternatural. The plot is weak and wandering, but the constructive faculty seldom showed strongly in Fletcher or his brother poet. Coleridge touched them home when he said their plots were wholly lacking in artifice, and Hazlitt has them fairly on the hip when he says that they made a plaything of their subject. Walter Scott remarked in the same connection that it seemed to him as if their plays began because the curtain rose, and ended because it fell. As for the morals of the brilliant brethren, they are, as Schlegel mildly puts it, ambiguous. But they are on occasion something worse than ambiguous. The young men had the misfortune to possess a certain rank. They lived in society (which ever weighs on the artist nature, as the Old Man of the Sea on the shoulders of Sinbad). They wrote in an age when "to be like the Court was a playe's praise"—the Court being like nothing that was decent. Hence that gross and most tedious stream of ribaldry which defiles some of their choicest plays, like, as Leigh Hunt says, "a torrent of feculence beside a chosen garden." But, rest their souls! they have paid the penalty of their ribaldry. Shakespeare, whom the gentle youths affected to think lightly of, though they studied him piously, is to-day the most honoured book save one in the language. Beaumont and Fletcher are exclusively top-shelf authors, whom none but students read.

There is, however, far less gratuitous grossness to stain the scenes of "The Faithfull Sheperdesse" than is to be found in most of the pieces in the Beaumont and Fletcher collection. For all that, there are passages which have needed to be rigorously dealt with. The task of editing the play for polite representation has been undertaken by Mr. Godwin, who, with the capable assistance of Mr. Wills, has Bowdlerised it with commendable discretion. Mr. Godwin says in the preface to his acting version that he is indebted to Lady Archibald Campbell for the first clear perception of the merits of the play. It is to be hoped that for this Lady Archibald has had his thanks, for when

the dross has been removed from "The Faithfull Sheperdesse" there remains much pure gold to be gathered by the student. Besides the cutting away of passages which were, no doubt, written for and must have greatly delighted King James's gentlemen, the editor has found it necessary to compress the piece from five acts into three. In this state it is played in just two hours, a period beyond which one cannot count upon the weather. "The Faithfull Sheperdesse," an idyll rather than a play, is better suited to the closet than the stage; but it is not to be denied that the scenes and characters gain a certain naturalness by their being shown in the open air, amid surroundings which it needed but a small stretch of the imagination to realise as the proper home of the worshippers of Pan. At the least, one was not anxious, sitting under the shade of elms with the sun slanting through the thick branches, to pry too curiously into faults of construction, or to be over-critical as to the naturalness of motives. One was willing for once to let plot and probability take care of themselves, to watch with quiet pleasure the unfolding of one lovely picture after another, to rest in the sensuous music of Fletcher's verse. Shepherds and sherpherdesses passed and repassed, and the little chequered drama of their loves unwound itself to a running accompaniment of pastoral song, the note of pipes, and the gambolling of satyrs amongst the brushwood. One was even ready to think—so well the illusion was maintained—that after all something not so very different from this might almost have happened in Thessalian glades most two thousand years ago.

The scenes lend themselves readily to just that sort of decorative treatment which best befits a woodland idyll played in the woods. And the opportunity thus afforded the management seized and made the very most of. The grouping of the characters whenever a crowd was present on the stage was in the highest degree effective. No picture could be imagined softer and sweeter in colour, more admirable in design, or more harmonious in its general effect, than that which is disclosed when the curtain is first drawn aside. A band of shepherds and shepherdesses are discovered winding in measured dance round and about the high image of Pan, to which, while the smoke of incense rises from the altar below, they are singing a hymn of praise. The music ended, the priest of Pan appears, tall, white-bearded, in flowing robes, and the people kneel while he sprinkles them with purifying water. This is but one of many very beautiful pictures. How quaintly pleasing, for instance, the effect at the close of this act where the shepherds, leaving their flocks in the heat of the day, cast themselves under the trees, and singing a drowsy slumber-song, one by one drop off to sleep. The procession from the bower of Clorin, which, with a song to the God of Sheep, brings the play to an end, is another example of the clever marshalling of auxiliaries—a picture glowing with colour. These auxiliary rustics (the poor helots of the stage are called "supers," but this a perfumed host), though they have not speaking parts, are far from dumb. They form the chorus, and most admirably they sing the really delightful music which the Rev. A. W. Batson has

composed expressly for the piece. The music was one of the choice features of the performance, and is far too good to be lost. Some opportunity should be given of hearing it in town. So much then for the play and what in the lingo of the theatre are called the accessories.

As to the acting, we have some small complaints to make here, which we may as well get rid of at once. The piece did not at first travel so smoothly as it should have done. The acting dragged in places; the company did not work together; there were roughnesses and a lack of harmony and ease. This may have been owing in part to the nervousness and anxiety of a first representation, but it struck us that there was another and a less acceptable reason—viz., that the play had not been fully rehearsed. If this were so, it is a pity; at least that is what those will say who, caring very little about the success of these performances from the social point of view, desire to see them succeed from the standpoint of art. The later representations showed a great improvement; but the acting, save in a few instances, was never wholly satisfactory. The cast was not as strong as it might have been; we missed one or two of the ladies and one at least of the gentlemen who played so well in "As You Like It." But the company, you see, is a voluntary one, and would not the president experience a terrible time of it if she did not give all the members their turn? By Pan! it is like enough.

Mr. Hermann Vezin took the part of the Sullen Shepherd, and with his ringing speech and energetic action filled the scene as often as he was present. Mr. Elliot, a very sound actor with a rather inflexible style, was the good-natured Satyr. Mr. Rose played Daphnis, the Modest Shepherd, in very humorous fashion. We do not at all agree with his reading of the part, which Fletcher surely never intended to be clownish; but Mr. Rose was cast for Daphnis, and he is nothing if not a comic actor. The Wanton Shepherd was Mr. G. Wade, who has a good figure, and a voice better suited for singing spirited songs than for reciting pastoral poetry. Thenot, that altogether absurd and impossible shepherd, was played by Mr. R. De Cordova earnestly enough, but in a style somewhat too robustious. Mr. Bindloss was such an exceedingly elegant priest that Pan, had he been anything of a dandy himself, must have been jealous of him. He spoke his lines carefully. Lord Edward Churchill effectually concealed his identity under the garb of the Old Shepherd. Mrs. George Batten was a comely Amarillis, and played a thanklesss part in a very conscientious spirit. Lady Edward Churchill was an acceptable Clorin, a part which demands sympathetic rather than forcible presentation. The Princess Hellen of Kappurthala was overburdened by the part of Amoret, the Faithful Shepherdess of the idyll; there was a certain plaintive sweetness, a childlike naturalness in her acting which went far to atone for its defects, but she loooked and spoke like one too fragile for the free and open life of the pasture and the wood. On a higher and more artistic plane was the Cloe of Miss Lucy Roche. The

part of the Wanton Shepherdess has been decorously pruned, but so much of the spirit of the original remains that the slightest approach to suggestiveness in the acting would have made Cloe intolerable. It says much for the tact and cleverness of Miss Roche that Cloe became in her hands not only tolerable, but charming. It was a fresh and natural piece of acting, full of spirit and energy. Where the lines took a humorous turn she gave them the fullest point, and she never missed an opportunity.

The Perigot of Lady Archibald Campbell is a performance from which criticism need not shrink. Her acting, both here and in "As You Like It," has given a tone and distinction to these performances which deserves the warmer recognition that, at the first, one hardly looked for, and the absence of which one would not have felt justified in complaining of. For, in truth, what did one expect when it was announced last year that a lady of title had got together a company of amateurs to act pastoral pieces in the open air? To be candid, one expected little more than some pretty masquerading in expensive costumes; a new diversion for Society (with a large S), likely, at best, to revive satiric memories of the days when French ladies of degree tucked up their petticoats, and flourished crooks with ribbands at the top, for the amusement of a silly king and a gaudy court. Princes and a variety of titled personages, to whom art owes a good deal less than nothing, were to lend their patronage—enough, from the artistic standpoint, to damn the enterprise ere it had had a chance. So critics went to the first performance in not the kindest mood. But the happiest of surprises awaited them, for it was quickly seen that the President of the company had better aims than the amusement of idle peers; a higher purpose than to give Society (still with a big S) a new thing in crazes. The artistic spirit, nowhere so rare as in those elegant circles which George Meredith calls "the centres of polished barbarism," was behind, and informing, the whole performance. The President, after all, was looking more to her critics than to the persons of importance on the front benches. The general character of the performances, from first to last, has shown this; and, more than all, it has been shown by the acting of Lady Archibald herself. Her Orlando breathed the spirit of Shakespearean romance; it was instinct with poetry, and graceful beyond expression. Still, it will be urged, and may be admitted, Orlando is not a difficult part to play. Granted a feeling for the poetry of Shakespeare (though, glancing at the modern stage, is not this a good deal to grant?), physical endowments, and the elocutionary gift, and the part may be played successfully. Actors, at any rate, count it an easy part; but then the woodenness of the average Orlando! Perigot, however, is really a test part. There is madness in it, and to play the madman convincingly asks resources not commonly found with amateurs. We had thought the mad scene might show the weakness of Lady Archibald, but, in fact, it showed her strength. She passed in this scene completely under the spell of

her part, and reached a reality which few amongst the audience could have been prepared for. The vacant eye, the aimless gestures, the wild and wandering tones of the voice, the uncertain carriage—these were amongst the marks by which one recognised the truthfulness of the performance; and a comparison of this scene with the earlier and gayer ones, and in particular with the tiny and very dainty scene where Perigot woos Amaryllis in mistake for Amoret, showed the extent and variety of the actress's range. As the part has not been played, I believe, for above two hundred years, it had to be done without the help of tradition; so that to the merit of fidelity must be added that of originality. It was a performance which discovered throughout those ideal and imaginative qualities whose worth is in proportion to their rarity.

T. H.

"THE GREAT PINK PEARL."

A New and Original Farcical Play, in Three Acts, by R. C. Carton and Cecil Raleigh. First acted at the Olympic Theatre, on May 7, 1885. Produced at the Prince's Theatre, on July 6, 1885.

Prince Paul Peninkoff	Mons. Marius.	Watson, P.C., L.Y., 195	Mr. H. Parry.
Count Serge Keromine	Mr. A. M. Denison.	Commissary of Police	Mr. Strathmore.
Anthony Sheen	Mr. E. W. Garden.	Princess Peninkoff ...	Miss Compton.
Patruccio Gormani ...	Mr. C. Groves.		(Mrs. R. C. Carton).
Valovitch	Mr. S. Caffrey.	Mary Turner...	Miss Gabrielle Goldney.
Albert	Mr. Hamilton Bell.	Jessie	Miss Clara Jecks.
George Lillicarp	Mr. S Harcourt.	Mrs. Sharpus	Mrs. E. H. Brooke.
Ivan...	Mr. C. Bowland.		

On the afternoon of the 7th of May last, two new productions were given at the London theatres. The one was "The Great Pink Pearl," by Messrs. R. C. Carton and Cecil Raleigh, at the Olympic, and the other a comedy called "The Road to Fame," and said to be an adaptation from the German, at the Vaudeville. Neither could be said to hold out beforehand any special promise of entertainment, and those who make it their business or their pleasure to attend first performances were pretty equally divided as to which house they should cast in their lot with. By and by, those who chose the Vaudeville heard some wonderful accounts of the production at the rival establishment. "The Great Pink Pearl" was said to be really a pearl beyond price; at all events, rumours were circulated to the effect that fabulous offers had been made to the fortunate young authors for their work before even the curtain had fallen upon the last act. The piece was ingenious in conception, it was perfectly harmless, it was brightly written, it was handled with rare stagecraft. Expectation, therefore, was roused to a high degree when it was announced that Mr. Edgar Bruce was the fortunate manager who had secured the piece, and that it was to be put forthwith into the regular nightly bill at the Prince's Theatre.

Few plays, perhaps, could pass absolutely unscathed through the ordeal which was thus prepared for this really ingenious comedy on its reproduction at the Prince's. The audience this time was not an audience willing and eager to welcome anything beyond the silly inanities and the

depressing exhibitions of ambitious incompetency which one is ordinarily called on to endure at the hands of scratch companies at afternoon performances. It was essentially a critical audience, and when I venture to say that some disappointment was felt, I only state that which was expressed on all hands. Possibly the acting may have had something to do with this result. That admirable eccentric comedian, Mr. Giddens, was no longer in the cast, while those of the original performers who did remain appeared to act with less *entrain* than before, as though overawed by the gorgeousness of their new surroundings. In spite of all this, however, the work undeniably has merit of a kind sufficiently rare. It is not really original in the strict sense of the word, although, in the absence of anything like a distinctive school of English farcical comedy, our managers and dramatists can hardly be blamed for copying or imitating foreign models. Messrs. Carton and Raleigh — after the manner of Mr. Pinero in "The Magistrate"—have apparently given us a variation of their own upon scenes and characters which are, as it were, the stock-in-trade of the French vaudevillist. We are all familiar with a number of successful productions in which the whole intrigue is conducted very much after the same principle as a game of hide-and-seek. Sometimes it is a compromising letter, as in Sardou's "Pattes-de-Mouche;" at others it is only a straw hat, as in Labiche's "Chapeau de Paille d'Italie" (for translating which, by-the-by, in a couple of days, Mr. Gilbert so much resents having received £700). In any case, the essential condition is the same. The article, whatever it is, must be eagerly sought for, and must repeatedly, like Fortune's favours, just elude the grasp of those who set out on a mad chase after it.

From this point of view at least "The Great Pink Pearl" must be pronounced even exceptionally strong. Given the fact that that famous jewel is lost, and it must be evident, seeing that its value is assessed at six millions of francs, that the owner of it must have a sufficiently strong motive for discovering its whereabouts. But this is not all. It will be observed that a number of persons are interested in it, all in different degrees, and all having distinct but sufficient motives for endeavouring to trace it. There is first of all the Russian Princess, who endeavours to negociate its sale through the impecunious young Anthony Sheen, who is sought out by her emissary in Prince's Street, Covent Garden, in mistake for a namesake of his, an American millionaire, whose residence is at Prince's Gate, Hyde Park. The Princess is naturally anxious when she finds that neither the purchase money nor the jewel is forthcoming, and, moreover, her anxiety is increased when she finds that the absence of the ring in which the great pink pearl is set is discovered by her husband, and that this is considered by him as proof positive that she is playing him false. Then there are the husband Prince Peninkoff; the Irish Italian Russian Nihilist and operatic singer, Patruccio Gormani, who so strangely startles his neighbours by practising the vocal scales and accompanying himself upon an organ at

his lodgings; and lastly, not to mention some minor personages, there is the *soi-disant* American millionaire himself, the occupant of an elegant suite at a fashionable Parisian hotel which he takes with the object of purchasing the pink pearl of the Princess, and reselling it at an increased price to the real millionaire, thus pocketing what would be called on the Stock Exchange a substantial "difference." To do him justice, this last personage, who is the head and fount of all the troubles, honestly intends to buy the pearl, and does no more, in fact, than the Scotch Professor is advised to do in the adaptation of Von Moser's "Ultimo," when he is told he should sell "Grand Trunks" at a time when he does not happen to possess any of those securities. Circumstances, however, are too strong for Sheen's good intentions. In an evil moment, he places the case within reach of his sweetheart, and she, thinking that it has been purchased for some fortunate rival, quickly abstracts the jewel. Meanwhile, it is not missed, and the case which is still supposed to contain it is offered as a sort of pledge as the price of a few minutes' silence to an unfortunate writ-server, who presently afterwards happens to be captured in mistake for Gormani, the Nihilist, and carried away, towards the frontier, gagged and helpless, for transportation to Siberia. It is needless to follow the labyrinth of the plot further. From this point, of course, a wrong scent is started, and much bewilderment and many complications are the result. So far, the piece, had it been played a little more briskly, would have fairly fulfilled the expectation entertained with regard to it. The scenes in which the little cockney writ-server—played with such life-like fidelity, and with such a quaint touch of humour by Mr. S. Harcourt—is captured first by the London and then by the Paris police, in both cases protesting energetically, but without effect, against the mistake of which he is the victim, even aroused some enthusiasm. The end, however, is undeniably weak, as was, perhaps, inevitable. It requires more than the talent even of the authors of "The Great Pink Pearl" to make the explanation of a joke amusing. The acting, in spite of a certain languor, to which reference has been made, and of the comparative failure of Mr. E. W. Garden in a light comedy part to which he is unaccustomed, presents some excellent features. M. Marius is unrivalled in eccentric comedy parts, such as that of Prince Peninkoff, with his ambitious diplomatic schemes and his feeble powers of perception; Mr. C. Groves gives quite an air of freshness to a rather conventional figure of an Irishman of violent and excited mien and amorous propensities; Mr. E. Caffrey is admirably made up as a Russian police-spy; Miss Compton (Mrs. Carton) has distinction, and succeeds in producing the air of aristocratic *hauteur* needful in a Russian Princess, and Miss Clara Jecks does not disdain to be seen appearing in the part of a servant girl, which she plays with much sprightliness and good humour.

F. M. Thomas.

"COUSIN JOHNNY."

A new and original Comedy, in three Acts, by J. F. Nisbet and C. M. Rae. Produced at the Strand Theatre, on Saturday, July 11, 1885.

Johnny	Mr. John S. Clarke.	Howle	Mr. F. Rothsay.
Sir George Desmond ...	Mr. H. R. Teesdale.	Lady Courtney	Miss Eleanor Bufton.
Timmins	Mr. F. Wyatt.	Florence Courtney... ...	Miss Lucy Buckstone.
Hugh Seymour	Mr. Creston Clarke.	Felicia Remington... ...	Miss Grace Arnold.
Capt. Faker	Mr. Hamilton Astley.	Tilly Cotton	Miss Marie Hudspeth.
Teddy Tufton	Mr. H. Crouch.	Mrs. Timmins...	Miss C. Ewell.

"Is there anything whereof it may be said: See, this is new? It hath already been of old time which was before us." Thus, long, long ago, wrote a certain critic, the wisdom of whose judgment was and still is generally accepted as incontrovertible. Solomon, who had seen *all* the works, including, let us presume, the dramatic works, that had been done under the sun, declared that he could find no new thing. Why, then, should we, who live some two thousand eight hundred years later, continue to fret and fume and cry out because we fail to discover a novelty? How can we hope or expect to? But we do. We know it is hopeless; yet we hope. "A new and original comedy" is announced for production. It is to be called "Cousin Johnny." Its authorship is not yet made known. We, the censors of a staler age, we nineteenth-century Solomons, go forth in all our self-glory to behold it. We, who have read, perhaps learnt by heart, the Book of Ecclesiasties, yet presume to seek for that it was not allowed our great progenitor to find. We hope to discover a new author, a new genius, with new views of life, new and faithful pictures of Society, new interest, new style.

Vanity of vanities! Is there anything in "Cousin Johnny" whereof we can honestly say: See, this is new? True, the authors *may* claim that the subject of their comedy is new and original to their minds. They may not boast the questionable advantage of having seen *all* the works done under the sun. Or, it may be otherwise. Very likely Mr. Nisbet and Mr. Rae, who have since been announced as the authors, if cross-questioned on the subject of the originality of their play, might be as candid as Goethe, who confessed that if he gave an account of all he owed to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in his favour. Shakespeare, for ought we know, may have said as much. Solomon, as we have seen, said more. And so I ask again, what marvel is it if we find that "Cousin Johnny" "hath already been of old time"; that his history is an old and familiar one; and that all that remains for critical judgment to consider is the manner in which it is here related and illustrated.

First, then, we are shown into the parlour of the "Black Cow," Little Adlington, and there, before being introduced to the hero we have come to see, we have to endure, for far too long a time, the company of a brace of disreputable turf blacklegs, Captain Faker and Teddy Tufton. Their slangy conversation, which has no reference to the plot and purpose of the play, bores us. We hope we are not going to see much of them and their strange, taciturn female accomplice, Miss Felicia Remington, through the piece. At length the landlord, Timmins, enters in a state of nervous excitement terrible to behold. Here our interest is awakened. What has this man done? He has surely murdered someone, or swallowed

something which has terribly disagreed with him. Captain Faker and Co., after paying their score in base coin, depart, only to reappear at intervals as ugly elaborations of the play. We then learn the cause of our host's perturbed spirit. Some twenty years ago, Sir George Desmond has left his child, the offspring of a secret marriage, in charge of Timmins. The boy has subsequently run away from his foster home, and been no more heard of. To-day, Sir George is coming to claim his son and heir. What is to be done? In this extremity, Mrs. Timmins, with womanly tact, suggests a remedy. It is a good, old-fashioned one. She has probably read some book, or possibly witnessed a play at the Theatre Royal, Little Adlington, in which a similar situation occurs. At anyrate, the suggestion which Mrs. Timmins makes is prompted less by imagination than memory. It is simply this:—That their own boy Johnny shall take the place of the Baronet's long-lost son. But Johnny is such a big, fat, loutish country bumpkin—a youth apparently old enough to be the father of a man. There is no sign of one drop of blue blood in his veins. Well, what of that? The parent who has been content to leave his child to be reared in the atmosphere of a common ale-house will surely not be surprised to find that twenty years' intercourse with the Q.C.'s, "the queer customers of the bar," as Johnny facetiously calls his tap-room friends, has somewhat diluted his patrician blood, and rusted the gentility that should be his by nature. And so the scheme is put into execution.

"Johnny," says Mrs. Timmins as her rude pet rolls into the parlour, "I have a surprise for you." "What is it, mother? Has the black hen laid a white egg?" asks the rustic clown. "What would you say, Johnny, if I told you that Mr. Timmins is not your father?" "I should say, mother, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

It requires, however, little argument to make Master John believe that he is by birth an aristocrat. That happy fact being established to his satisfaction, he hastens to illustrate how a gentleman should behave according to democratic ideas. He calls for champagne and cigars, he invites the turf gentlemen to enjoy his hospitality, he drinks, bets and gambles, and threatens to send his late parents out of the country if they oppose him. "What's the use of being a gentleman if I can't do as I like?" cries Johnny. And so he does what he likes to such an extent that he is soon in a worse condition than ever to be presented to Sir George, who duly arrives, in company with Lady Courtney and her daughter, Florence. This young lady is destined to become the future baronet's wife, but when introduced to us, she is found to be desperately in love with young Hugh Seymour, Sir George Desmond's private secretary. And here it must be noted that even to the most dull-sighted playgoer, it becomes at once obvious that this polished youth will turn out to be "the real Sir Roger." This being so, it is, perhaps, a pity that the authors could not contrive to take us into their confidence. We all enjoy stage surprises, but we don't like to be thought blind. If we guess the author's secret in Act 1, we feel somewhat indignant that we are not credited with an astuteness until the end of the play. That which is described as "a new and original comedy" can hardly be considered a

trifle or an unpretentious work which calls for no close criticism, and, in my opinion, in this half-secrecy will be found one of the chief defects in the composition of "Cousin Johnny." As soon as all the *dramatis personæ* have been introduced to us, we find our interest in the plot has ceased. We know well enough that Johnny, after being allowed his fling, must be discovered as an impostor, and sent back to his proper place, the bar of the "Black Cow." And so, without following further the incidents of the play, it need only be said that the *dénouement* everyone has anticipated is brought about by the authors in rather a clumsy and abrupt manner. The conscience-smitten Timmins arrives at Granby Hall, where, during the whole of the second act, Master Johnny has been making himself thoroughly at home, and simply confesses to Sir George the trick he has played upon him. "Then, if this is not my son, where is he?" cries Sir George in a rage. Timmins looks out of the window, and, beholding Hugh Seymour for the first time after an interval of fifteen years, exclaims, "If I am not mistaken, there he is." Whereat little surprise is expressed on the stage, and none whatever in the auditorium. Altogether, then, "Cousin Johnny" can hardly be pronounced a good or satisfactory comedy. Its story seems too familiar to excite our interest; its construction fails in ingenuity; not one of its characters calls forth our sympathy or admiration, and its dialogue, although never dull or unacceptable, is by no means remarkable for brilliancy or freshness of thought.

Yet, notwithstanding this adverse critical judgment, the piece has been received throughout with laughter and applause—and why? Because the principal and only good acting part in the play has been sustained by a comedian whose popularity is as great as it is well deserved. Mr. John S. Clarke's peculiar humour, his wonderful facial expression, his admirable artistic instinct and thorough knowledge of stage effect, which enables him to accompany every word with suitable action, are in themselves sufficient qualities to win success for a far worse piece than that Messrs. Nesbit and Rae have entrusted to him. Moreover, Mr. Clarke has been so long closely associated with standard comedy that he seems to carry with him into this modern play the flavour and spirit of the old school, which to some of us is so acceptable that it adds solidity to what might otherwise be found veneer. Mr. Clarke gauges to a nicety the distinction necessary between a stage character and the original as seen in real life. He seems to argue that the bold touch requisite in scene-painting the actor should apply in like degree to his actions behind the footlights—and so "Cousin Johnny," which in less able hands might be made a tame caricature, becomes in Mr. Clarke's a life-like portrait of a country clown. Little opportunity is afforded any other member of the company for distinction. Mr. Teesdale is a manly Sir George Desmond, but would be better for a little more dignity and repose. Mr. F. Wyatt, for whom there is seldom aught but praise, is out of his line as Timmins. In attempting to create an original character, the clever actor is found to exaggerate. Mr. Creston Clarke is a quiet, gentlemanly, unobtrusive Hugh Seymour. Mr. Hamilton Astley and Mr. H. Crouch are, naturally, and to their credit, the very reverse—noisy, caddish, and very obtrusive as the turf swindlers.

Mr. F. Rothsay does not succeed in making Howle less objectionable than such detestable stage flunkeys always are. Servants of Howle's type, if they do exist in real life, may well be left by dramatic authors to "the cold shade of neglect." Miss Eleanor Bufton makes the most of the small part of Lady Courtney. Miss Lucy Buckstone and Miss Grace Arnold are all they can be, pretty and graceful representatives of their respective characters, Florence Courtney and Felicia Remington. Miss Marie Hudspeth deserves a word of praise for her spirited and humorous performance of the part of Tilly Cotton, Cousin Johnny's sweetheart, to whom he remains faithful through all. Miss C. Ewell is an amusing Mrs. Timmins.

CUNNINGHAM BRIDGMAN.

"THÉODORA" AT THE GAIETY.

A Play by VICTORIEN SARDOU. Produced at the Porte St. Martin Theatre, Paris, on Friday, December 26, 1884. Produced, for the first time in England, at the Gaiety Theatre, on Saturday, July 11, 1885.

LONDON CAST:—

Andréas	M. MARAIS.	Timoclés	M. JEGU.
Justinien	M. PHILIPPE GARNIER.	L'Ostiaire	M. DELISLE.
Marcellus	M. VOLNY.	Le Bourreau	M. CARTEREAU.
Bélisaire	M. FAILLE.	Théodora...	Madame SARAH BERNHARDT.
Faber	M. BOUYER.		
Charibert...	M. PAUL RENEY.	Tamyris	Madame MARIE LAURENT.
Agathon	M. ANGELO.	Antoine	Madame MARY VALLIER.
Euphratas	M. LEON NOEL.	Kallirho	Madame MARIE DURAND.
Nicephore	M. CRESSONNOIS.	Iphis...	Madame B. BOULANGER.

IF Sardou condescends to read his critics in detail, he must have been amused, I fancy, at the amount of archæological research brought to bear upon his "great historical play" of "Théodora." Gibbon has been consulted for the true character of the Byzantine Empress, who, we have solemnly been reminded, gave up her evil ways on becoming Justinian's consort, and died respectably of cancer in the stomach; the feuds of the Blues and the Greens have been investigated, with a view to the discovery of anachronisms in the dramatist's treatment of them; the barbaric pageantry of the *mise-en-scène* and the cut of the clothes of the *dramatis personæ* have been learnedly scrutinised and discoursed upon. All this, it seems to me, is a little beside the mark. "Théodora," in its pagan and semi-oriental guise, is hardly to be taken *au sérieux*. It is not an historical drama, but a masquerade—a huge *blague* or *réclame* designed to tickle the Boulevardian appetite for sensation. Paris had tired a little of Sarah Bernhardt and her eccentricities, and some striking novelty or surprise was needed to make her once more *à la mode*. Sardou, the master of theatrical effect, undertook to meet the difficulty, and "Théodora" was brought forth. It was a bad play, but it was a big sensation, and it served its purpose as a nine-days wonder on the Boulevards. The dramatist, in truth, never contrived a cleverer *coup de théâtre* than the production of this gigantic, but impossible, piece, as a fillip to the flagging attention of the public. At that somewhat discredited theatre, the Porte St. Martin, it instantly obtained vogue, that most valuable of all the elements of theatrical success, and, now transplanted to the Gaiety, it has for a fortnight past been attracting crowded audiences, who

have been content to stew for four hours in an oven-like atmosphere, watching its wearisome evolutions, partly for the sake of Madame Sarah Bernhardt's study of passion, which constitutes the somewhat slender backbone of the action, but largely, also, it must be confessed, as a tribute to Fashion. Certain trifling anachronisms have been pointed out in the story, and Sardou himself, with a solemn appreciation of the joke, has, if I remember rightly, confessed to an anachronism of six months in a matter of Byzantine politics. It would not be far from the truth to say that the play exhibits an anachronism of something like 1,400 years. It breathes the spirit not of ancient Byzantium, but of modern Paris. Stripped of her Imperial robes, Sardou's "Théodora" is neither more nor less than a *rouleuse* of the Boulevards, who has, let us say, inveigled a rich admirer into marriage, but who has preserved her gutter instincts side by side with the craving for a genuine love, which, if we may accept the testimony of Victor Hugo, Dumas *fils*, and Emile Augier, is characteristic of the courtesan. Had Victor Hugo never given us his "Marion de Lorme," or Dumas *fils* his "Marguerite Gautier," or had Emile Augier never penned his now famous phrase, *la nostalgie de la boue*, in "Le Mariage d'Olympe," it is hardly probable that Sardou, who is not an inventor, but a wonderful adaptor of other men's ideas, would have drawn "Théodora" on her present lines. At all events, "Théodora" is manifestly the growth not of a Byzantine but of a Paris slum.

Similarly, Andréas and his fellow conspirators are unmistakably French and modern. They talk the political bombast of the Victor Hugo school of romanticism, and they behave, not like Greek or Roman patriots, but like latter-day Republicans. In his love-making, no less than in his politics, Andréas is clearly a contemporary of the Théodora I have described. Byzantium was a stronghold of paganism and corruption. Respect for womanhood was a virtue as unknown to its rulers as it was to the courtiers of our own Charles II., or to the frivolous society of the Louis Quatorze period. The doubts, the fears, the scruples, and the sentimentality of Andréas belong to modern French fiction; they are as foreign to the barbarism of the age of Justinian as they would be to the court of any Oriental potentate of the present day.

The truth is that "Théodora" is a huge Oriental panorama in which the costumier and the scene painter alone have aimed at reproducing local colour. If it could boast of a plot, it might be described as a modern melo-drama tricked out in some of the trappings of a classic tragedy. Plot, however, it has none. It is a mere string of inconsequent scenes or tableaux, which only the individuality of Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt serves to connect with each other. It has an ending no doubt in accordance with classic models, but, on the other hand, it is written in the prose of everyday life, although it may be taken as an axiom that, whether a play be English or French, if its purpose is to transport us to a classic period or to "reconstitute an epoch," the medium of verse is indispensable. As a sensation, Théodora has been a success. Its dramatic value, however, is by no means in proportion to its length or its pretentiousness, and may be said to lie exclusively in the *bizarre* study of

female passion assigned to Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt. Two-thirds of the play, as it stands, might very well be thrown aside as superfluous, including the whole mass of pseudo-archæological and historical detail with which it is loaded.

A frank exposition of the substance of the drama, free from its colossal setting, would have been infinitely preferable from the artistic point of view, though it might not perhaps have served so well the purpose of *réclame*, for it must be confessed that the Byzantine politics so exhaustively discussed, and even the splendours and ceremony of the Byzantine court to which we are so obligingly initiated by the young Gallic envoy, arouse but a languid interest.

The entire play, as I have said, sums itself up in Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt. I should have liked to discuss the truth of Sardou's view of female character, and Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt's exposition of them from a woman's point of view, but unfortunately the ordinary woman feels herself at the outset of the inquiry, beyond her depth. *La nostalgie de la boue* may or may not represent something more than the Frenchman's aptitude for turning a phrase. It may, for ought I know, represent a thing. In the present case, it is certain that Sardou has gratuitously engrafted it upon the character of Justinian's consort, and I must own that the gutter aspect of Théodora's career in the play strikes me rather as the device of an ingenious dramatist than as a truthful trait of character. When we come to Théodora's love for Andréas we get upon more intelligible ground. What Schiller calls *die Sehnsucht nach der Liebe* may no doubt exist in a palace, as well as in a cottage, and the various aspects of Théodora's passion for Andréas, her veiling of her identity, and of her nameless past, in order to retain his love, her saving him from death at the cost of the life of Marcellus, and even after the public contumely and insult which he heaps upon her, her visit to his hiding-place, her desperate expedient of the love-philtre (assuming her to believe in the virtue of the sorceress's arts), and finally her submission to the hands of the executioner over the dead body of her lover, are all womanly and true, though Sardou may, perhaps, have availed himself too freely, as in the killing of Marcellus with a hair-pin, of the licence allowed to a dramatist in dealing with historical incident.

In her portrayal of female passion, especially in its more impulsive and violent forms, as Théodora, Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt's art is seen at its best; and no other *rôle* probably brings out so many phases of it as this, which the author has cut to her measure as a tailor cuts a coat. In one respect, unfortunately, deterioration may be perceived. The languishing airs and the *abandon* by which she is wont to express the rapture and tenderness of a reciprocated love, are somewhat overdone; they have lost some of their charm, and threaten to lapse into a mannerism. Mdme Sarah Bernhardt's impersonation of Théodora is nevertheless one of the greatest, as it is one of the most trying, in her *répertoire*, and heavily handicapped though she has been by the vast dead weight of scenery, costume and accessories in the play, it will probably be her most memorable.

K. Venning.

Our Omnibus-Box.

If we cannot all obtain fair play, we can, at any rate, demand consistency. For my own part, I respect a man who is conscientious, but whose opinions are diametrically opposed to my own. But it strikes one as a little strange that this stale old cuckoo cry of a dramatic ring should be ventilated in a paper that, to my certain knowledge, has employed dramatists as dramatic critics for the last quarter of a century, and, no doubt, long before that. Shirley Brooks and E. L. Blanchard were most respected members of the staff of the theatrical journal in question, and I can conscientiously say that some of my own most earnest work was supplied for many years to the very editor who now considers that to write for the stage and to write for a newspaper is incompatible with honesty. Long after "Off the Line," "Peril," "Diplomacy," and "The Vicarage" were written and produced, column after column of essay and criticism were contributed by me to the excellent journal where I now find such wonderful words about dramatic rings. *Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis.* I cannot, for the life of me, see why journalists should be prohibited from writing for the stage any more now than a quarter of a century ago. They would never require to do so if the profession of journalism were a more lucrative one than it is. But it has remained precisely where it was twenty-five years ago. Successful plays make fortunes, and so do successful actors. Who ever heard of a successful journalist from a financial point of view? I never did.

But there is another point. Is it likely that men who have studied the stage for twenty years or more will hide their pens, bury their paper, and refuse to exercise such talent or tact as may be awarded to them, because silly and envious people talk nonsense about dramatic rings, and find a bad motive in every honest action?

The following letter might well have been addressed to an excellent editor whose conscience is disturbed by the phantom visit of a "dramatic ring," and whose language on the subject is more forcible than polite:—"My Dear ——,—With that politeness of diction that distinguishes your dramatic columns, you describe a certain order of critic as a man who 'sinks to the level of a hack adaptor, and touts for employment in this line with all the impudence and persistency of a journeyman cobbler in search of a job,' and you further illustrate your remarks with one of the many irate epigrams of Mr. Robert

Buchanan. As the depository of fact concerning this important subject, you may like to know that the 'dramatic ring,' if, indeed, it exists at all, is an institution of no modern origin. When I was first permitted to write dramatic criticisms five and twenty years ago, I found *The Times* represented by John Oxenford and Tom Taylor, both dramatists; *The Daily Telegraph* by our good friend, E. L. Blanchard, a dramatist, and surely not unknown as a critic to the readers of a certain theatrical journal; *The Daily News* by Edmund Yates and John Hollingshead, both dramatists; *The Morning Star* by Leicester Buckingham, a dramatist, or, perhaps, as you would more elegantly put it, a 'hack adaptor,' 'tout,' and 'journeyman cobbler,' who held out one hand to accept commissions, and kept the bludgeon of adverse criticism behind his back; *The Weekly Dispatch* by Bayle Bernard, a dramatist; *The Morning Advertiser* by F. Guest Tomlins, a dramatist; *The Athenæum* by J. A. Heraud, a dramatist; whilst Bates Richards, Richard Lee, W. S. Gilbert, and T. W. Robertson were all then or a few years afterwards both writing plays and criticising them. There was also another critic, or rather 'hack adaptor and tout,' according to your polite phraseology, who for many years was permitted—nay, encouraged, to contribute dramatic articles and criticisms to a well-known journal successively edited by father and son, long after he had been invited to adapt plays for the English stage, and had been permitted by his employers to do so in accordance with common practice, and without a suggestion that, by so doing, he would be untrue to his duty alike to his employers and the public. The grievance that you suggest may be true or may be imaginary, but may we who live and write and write to live not have the same credit for honesty and good faith as our respected predecessors?—Yours truly, C. S."

It would prove assuredly a somewhat impracticable undertaking to severally enumerate the merits of the various works shown in the vast number of picture galleries, which have been more or less thronged by crowds of expectant sightseers during what may be now pretty accurately termed the past London season. Contenting ourselves, therefore, with recalling some of the principally attractive studies contained in the more important collections, we would first mention the truly admirable portrait exhibited by the Society of British Artists, in Suffolk Street, of Señor Sarasate, as proving, we venture to think, one of the finest examples of Whistler's much-talked-of skill and genius which has yet been given us. The quiet, unaffected grace of the whole figure, standing out from an excellently graduated background of sombre hue, renders this likeness of the well-known violinist quite a masterpiece of simple and yet most realistic portraiture. A study shown in the same gallery of "Poole Harbour," by Leslie Thompson, is likewise praiseworthy as an able illustration of artistic feeling and sentiment.

Passing on to Mr. R. Dunthorne's well-known studio in Vigo Street, we find our attention arrested by a charmingly-arranged collection of mezzotintos, illustrating the invention and progress of the art to the time of its decay. A more interesting, and at the same time instructive, task it were difficult to conceive than that which consists in noting the gradual perfection wrought by time and experience upon this most beautiful form of engraving. Turning from a drawing by Ludwig Von Siegen (universally regarded as the first engraver in mezzotinto) to one by John Dixon of the Duke of Leinster, the latter work being described by Walpole as a "masterpiece of art which has never been excelled," we are able to determine for ourselves the truth of the above assertion. Contrasting the hard, angular lines perceptible in Siegen's composition with the exquisitely soft tones embellishing that of Dixon's, we slowly realise the marvellous height of perfection which the skill of the latter artist has attained. The glossy shades of the fur forming an appropriate lining to the loosely-fitting coat, the delicate pattern so minutely traced on the falling lace ruffles, seem rather the work of a painter's hand that that of an engraver's, possessing few means save those wrought by his own genius of effecting the requisite alternations of light and shade, which even the power of colour seems at times scarcely able to adequately or justly represent. Though the study we have thus feebly described is, perhaps, the finest specimen exhibited in the present collection, needless to say, there remain many others worthy close consideration and unqualified praise. Amongst these we would mention the portraits of the Countess of Aylesford and Mrs. Taylor (both after Sir Joshua Reynolds), the respective works of Valentine Green and William Dickenson, as also "The Fruit Barrow" by John Raphael Smith, a most exquisitely graceful study. Taking into consideration the many beauties existant in this most charming collection, it must prove a source of inevitable regret to all true lovers of art that the growing powers of some amongst our rising generation are not judiciously employed in awakening once again the taste for mezzotinto engraving.

Yet a few words would we also write concerning another exhibition, whose doors will probably be shut to the public ere these lines appear in print. The interest attracted towards the numerous works of Jan Van Beers, gathered together within the last few months within the commodious rooms of the Salon Parisien, New Bond Street, speaks well for the taste of those who have appreciatively discerned in this artist's studies of human character a breadth of style and composition united to rare individuality of sentiment such as is, alas! but too often found wanting in the compositions of our own countrymen. The numberless impressions gathered from sky, earth, and sea, so truthfully reproduced on tiny squares of canvas, would alone proclaim Mr. Van Beers to be an artist in the truest sense of the word, inasmuch as the most simple charms of nature, however small and seemingly unimportant to some minds, awaken in his own that spirit of sympathetic appreciation which appears to glory in the

power of representing to other kindred spirits the beauties of life it so deeply cherishes and admires. Turning towards this artist's larger compositions, we cannot fail to be in like manner struck by the singular vivacity and power of animation which invests his figures with a certain charm of individuality—easier felt than described.

The immense sacrifice of life and the enormous loss of property by fire that we daily read of makes any improvement in fire-resisting structures very valuable. Some interesting and instructive experiments have been lately undertaken by Professor Bauschinger, of Munich, in reference to the safety of cast-iron columns when exposed to the action of great heat. The professor, having arranged some cast and wrought iron columns heavily weighted, exactly as they would be if supporting a building, had them gradually heated, first to three hundred degrees, next to six hundred degrees, and finally to red-heat; then suddenly cooled them by a jet of water, just as might happen when water is applied to extinguish a fire. The experiments showed that the cast-iron columns, although they were bent by the red-heat, and exhibited transverse cracks when the cold water was applied, yet supported the weight resting on them; whilst the wrought-iron columns were bent before arriving at the state of red-heat, and were afterwards so much distorted by the water that re-straightening of them was out of the question. In fact, if supporting a real building, they would have utterly collapsed under the weight they had to sustain The professor therefore concludes, as the result of his experiments, that cast-iron columns, notwithstanding cracks and bends, would continue to support the weights imposed upon them; whilst wrought-iron columns would not. In experimenting on pillars of stone, brick, and cement-concrete, the last was found to be the best. Cement-concrete pillars withstood the fierce action of the fire for periods varying from one to three hours; brick pillars, as well as those of clinkers set in cement mortar, displayed great resistance; whilst natural stone—granite, limestone, and sandstone—were not fireproof. It would therefore appear that, of the several materials for pillars supporting weights, the best for fire-resisting purposes were the cast-iron and cement-concrete. But the concrete to be perfectly fire-resisting should be made from sulphate of lime (gypsum), not ordinary building or carbonate of lime, nor Portland cement, as neither of these are fire-resisting substances. There has been discovered a cement of the required character, of which the *Building News* says:—"We would direct especial attention to a valuable report on a new economical and fireproof cement by Mr. G. H. Hunt (Verity and Hunt). We have ourselves carefully examined the cement made by Messrs. Joseph Robinson and Co., of Carlisle, and can fully endorse Mr. G. H. Hunt's remarks. It is equal in every respect to Keene's Parian and other high-class cements used in the best work, while its cost will admit of its employment instead of the ordinary lime, sand, and hair plaster, which at present has to be put up with, where expense is an object to

be avoided. The new cement is fireproof, very hard and strong; it takes paint well at once, and can be used at any time of the year, or in any weather, and can, if desired, be brought up to a splendid polish. Captain Shaw, the chief of the London Fire Brigade, 'believes it would be more effectual in preventing the spread of fire than any other of the common plasters or cements generally used,' and his opinion, as most readers know, is not lightly formed. The cement has, indeed, found favour wherever used, and only needs to be known to take a lasting position as a standard building and fire-proofing material."

Miss Alma Murray's dramatic reading, in aid of the London Branch of the Wagner Society, took place on Friday evening, July 17, at 133, New Bond Street, with complete success. The accomplished young artist's name brought together a large and distinguished audience, which included Mr. Robert Browning and other leaders in literature and art. Each of her efforts was received with marked favour, the most special enthusiasm, perhaps, being reserved for the Prologue to Browning's "Pippa Passes," and, above all, the final scenes of Shelley's great tragedy, "The Cenci," a performance of which, with Miss Alma Murray as Beatrice, would be a hardly dubitable success.

It is almost impossible for us to glance beyond the opening pages of a recently-published volume entitled "Shakespeare's Garden of Girls" (Remington) without admiring the eminently thoughtful and reflective temperament of the writer, a fact necessarily drawing our minds into close sympathy with Miss Leigh-Noel's assertion—that these several studies of the great master-poet's types of womanhood have proved to their authoress "a source of pure refreshment and education, and a never-failing spring of pleasure." One and all of us have doubtless pictured to ourselves at one time or another imaginary visions of the personal and mental attractions of these maids and matrons, the immortal creations of a genius which has handed down from generation to generation matchless examples of woman's enduring love and unsullied purity. But, following suit to Rosalind's query, "Can one desire too much of a good thing?" it proves both a profitable and agreeable task to note, as in the present instance, the workings of an outsider's ideas and reflections, more especially when these are couched in such graceful word-painting as that with which the authoress of this "Garden of Girls" ably describes the poet's exquisitely natural scenes of pastoral and rural life. For this reason, we would mention the chapter on Rosalind as being in many respects the most successful of these picture series, a tendency to dwell somewhat unnecessarily upon questions of personal taste and opinion proving an error of judgment which we could wish were less frequently perceptible amidst the pages of these numerous character sketches. Most admirable, nevertheless, are those given towards the volume's close of the waiting women, the

attendants and trusted confidants of their high-born mistresses. Passing from the clever description of Maria, who heads the list of this little bevy of handmaidens, to that dealing with the purely devoted loves of Charmian and Iras, the staunch followers even in death of the heart-broken Cleopatra, there is scarcely a line we would desire omitted or altered, the very conciseness of the language rendering these miniature portraits quite charming in their perfect completeness. Pleasing thoughts and recollections will assuredly be aroused whilst perusing Miss Leigh-Noel's records of the joys and sorrows of those dwelling within the favoured precincts of this "Shakespeare's Garden of Girls."

I have received the following communication on "Drink and the Drama" from Miss Beatrice Grey:—

The habits of theatrical audiences have been commented on by writers in all ages ever since the theatre became an institution, and not a little satire has been levelled against them. And one of the most common complaints has been that a great deal of unnecessary refreshment was taken in the theatre, though the wine and cake of classic times was excusable when a performance sometimes lasted twelve hours, and people naturally took their meals with them. Coming to later days, however, we find the tippling habits of those who frequented the lobbies and crush-rooms commented upon with much severity, and evidently not without reason. It is not intended in this article to go into historical details concerning this habit, though they would be easy to accumulate, but to point out that, whatever were the faults of our forefathers in this respect, we have certainly not mended matters.

If we may judge from the habits of a great many people who frequent theatres at the present day, they go to the playhouse mainly for the purpose of imbibing a certain amount of stimulants and smoking cigarettes. The moment an act is over, young and old, boys who are under age and mature men who ought to know better, rush off to the refreshment-room, light up cigarettes, and order brandy and soda. It seems as if the average Englishman could not exist for the short space of a couple of hours or so without those consolations; and the intelligent foreigner, if ever he looks into this matter, must be unfeignedly astonished at our habits. For remember that these worn and thirsty souls who rush to the bar, as men who have travelled for days in the desert might do to a stream in an oasis, have as a rule, just had their dinners, and, it is fair to assume, quite as much to eat and drink as was requisite to restore exhausted nature. As a rule, then, the first rush for refreshment is made little more than an hour after the last glass of wine has been taken at dessert, or the yellow Chartreuse sipped with the coffee. These *vivcurs* have not even the animal excuse of hunger and thirst—both have been assuaged a short time before; and as to smoking, surely a man who has had a post-prandial cigar, or even only a cigarette in the cab

on his way to the theatre, can exist for longer than sixty minutes without more tobacco. And, despite all that has been written and said on the subject, these habits of drinking and smoking at theatres are on the increase, as anyone can satisfy himself who cares to explore the refreshment-room of a popular theatre whenever there happens to be a good house. He will find a crowd surging round the bars, after the fashion of that in a low public-house just before closing time, until he will begin to wonder which is the greater attraction—the play or the opportunities for imbibing stimulants by no means remarkable, as a rule, for purity.

Such being the habits of a great many playgoers, it is not to be wondered at that the manager—who is, after all, but the servant of the public—endeavours, as best he may, to cater for such strange tastes. We find, then, in all theatres nowadays a vast amount of space set apart for the drinking-bars and smoking-rooms, meeting you at every turn, which might be very much better utilised in making the audience more comfortable. Thus it happens that the want of space, which is forced upon your notice by the discomfort of having a man crush past you in the stalls on his way to the refreshment-room, is partly caused by the very bars which minister to his bibulous propensities. And seeing that the great difficulty in a modern theatre is to obtain proper room for each person, and gangways between the seats that shall make ingress and egress easy, it is rather hard to have valuable space occupied by bars and smoking-rooms which, if thrown into the auditorium, would make all the difference between comfort and discomfort. Some theatres are, of course, worse than others, and those need not be particularised, but it is not satisfactory to find that the most recently-built houses are those in which the largest amount of space is reserved for the indulgence of tastes other than those a theatre is primarily intended to gratify. And here we may point to another objection to smoking which will, before long, be taken cognisance of by the insurance companies. Smokers are proverbially careless, and there can be nothing more dangerous than the bits of half-consumed cigarettes which are scattered all over the place when the bell rings to announce the opening of another act—a sad distraction, it must be allowed, to the peaceful consumption of tobacco and the imbibition of whisky.

It is plain enough, we should hope, that such habits do not tend to raise the character of theatrical audiences. We are not going to be too severe, or we might point to theatres wherein that state of things is not uncommon which has been satirised in the line which tells us how "the half-drunk lean over the half-drest." But assuredly the constant refreshment which he imbibes is not likely to make a man a more competent or thoughtful critic of the play before him. It probably distracts his attention, and the occupations of the *entr'acte* and the gossip of the lobby are of more importance to him than the conduct of the intrigue in the play, the construction of the piece, or the way in which the characters are represented. You cannot expect to

remain in an ideal world when you are constantly going back to the most infinitesimal twaddle of the real, and sandwich in doubtful stories and still more doubtful brandy between the acts of a poetical drama. Of course there are people who will sneer at the idea of taking theatre-going so seriously, will declare that they only want to be amused and so forth; but they may fairly be reminded that such are not the tastes of the best class of playgoers, who are, after all, not wholly composed of the microcephalous young gentlemen with fearful facial angles who patronise three-act burlesques. It is needless to dilate on the annoyance which the constant passage in and out of the stalls and other places inflicts upon quiet people who only want to sit still and enjoy the play in peace. A man will calmly get up from the middle of a long row of stalls during each wait between the acts, and come crushing past gentlemen and ladies, greatly to their discomfort, simply because he cannot exist without brandy and water. It may be that he does not go out to drink, but his conduct is equally selfish, for he makes all this fuss simply that he may have five minutes' gossip in the lobby. Courtesy is, we know, the outcome of consideration for the feelings of others, and it is just because the latter characteristic is so rare nowadays that true politeness is becoming almost extinct among us. An arrogant contempt for the comfort of anybody but himself is the distinctive mark of the "oiled and curled Assyrian bull" of the period, and it is nowhere more conspicuous than in the stalls of a theatre. We are not speaking in haste when we say that there is very often more courtesy and consideration shown by those among the audience who are strangers to each other, in the gallery and pit than in the stalls.

And, *à propos* of the politeness of the stalls, here is an anecdote of theatrical manners in the present day—a true story of what happened in a London theatre not long ago during the representation of a series of French plays. A gentleman and his wife were seated in the stalls, when to them entered another individual of a Semitic cast of countenance and his wife. During the act the last-named person made a very offensive remark to her husband concerning the lady who had arrived first, and asked him to change places with her. This was said in French, and was perfectly audible to those sitting near. Nothing happened till the *entr'acte*, when the Semite went upstairs to the smoking room, and was promptly followed by the other gentleman, who, tendering his card, demanded an apology for the expression used regarding his wife. The husband of the offending lady took the card, and, without looking at it, tore it up and dropped it on the ground, whereupon No. 1 soundly smacked his face, and upon his roaring for a policeman, calmly replied: "If you had taken the trouble to look at my card you would know that the police cannot touch me, for I am the Brobdinagian Minister." Tableau.

Like all necessary reforms, this matter is in the hands of the public themselves. Such habits are doing no good to the theatres, are disgusting the best friends of the drama, and, indeed, helping to make it

more odious in the eyes of people who already regard it with disfavour. The theatre still has claims upon the attention of intellectual people, and if it is to retain them the atmosphere of the playghouse must be purged, so to speak, and the entertainment on the stage deprived of ignoble accessories.

Mr. S. B. Bancroft's speech at the "Theatrical Fund Dinner" was the most successful thing of the kind I ever heard—modest, effective, pathetic, and eloquent. He was, as Mr. Thomas Swinbourne truly observed, one of the best chairmen who ever adorned this festival. And he was equally happy in the patriotic and general toasts.

I feel certain that all our readers will join with me in an expression of thanks to my good friend, William Winter, for his delightful paper on "Olivia," published in this number of the magazine. It was written under very anxious circumstances, for Mr. Winter has been severely ill during his short visit to England; but he was determined to keep his promise, and has faithfully done so. May the sea journey on the way back to America restore him to health and spirits, and may he who so loves this England of ours, and has made so many friends over here, "live long, and prosper."

A Valedictory Ode.

Spoken by Mr. Henry Irving on the occasion of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's farewell at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, Monday, July 20, 1885.

A FRIEND and neighbour from the busy Strand,
Warned by the summons of Fate's prompting Bell,
Has come to take two comrades by the hand,
And bid them both regretfully "Farewell."

Parting to lovers may be "sorrow sweet,"
To friends all separation must give pain;
But time, consoling, turns the travelled feet,
And tells the parted—they may meet again.

No age or sickness saddens this adieu,
No piteous cause I plead, no alms I beg;
My toast is "Triplet, here's long life to you,
And years more laughter to delightful Peg."

The sailor sights at last his native land,
The swallow follows to accustomed nest;
So, two tried actors, toiling hand in hand,
Demand at last toil's after-blessing—Rest.

Their steady course was fann'd by favouring gales,
Their loyal purpose dimm'd by no regret;
Sponsors they stood to infant "Prince of Wales,"
With life renewed the classic "Haymarket."

Not to all artists, earnest though their aim,
As retrospective vision there appears
The priceless gift of an untarnished name,
The blameless history of twenty years.

Fired by the flush of youth, they found a way
To give to fading art a healthy cure;
The stage they loved revived beneath their sway,
They made art earnest, and they kept it pure.

Shall we forget, at this their parting hour,
How fact and fancy interwine and blend?
Saying, "The Stage acknowledged them a power,
Actor and actress found in them a friend."

"*Ars est celare artem*," 'tis inscribed,
Crowning this stage, and fancifully wrought;
From great ones past this precept they imbibed,
This needful lesson dutifully taught.

Dramatic flowers they gathered by the way,
And chose the brightest wheresoe'er it grows;
Never disdaining to contrast in play
French tiger lily with sweet English rose.

With kindly Robertson they formed a "School,"
Rejoiced in "Play" after long anxious hours;
"Caste" was for them, and theirs, a golden rule,
And thus by principle we made them "Ours."

Such an example in the after age
Will throw a softening haze o'er bygone care;
We close the volume at its brightest page,
But leave a blossom of remembrance there.

Good-bye, the cup of sympathy let's fill,
We'll drink it deep ere sorrow's sun be set;
Together you have mounted life's long hill,
And leave behind no record of regret;

Good-bye, old friends, it shall not be farewell,
Love is of art the birth and after-growth;
"Heaven prosper you" shall be our only knell,
Our parting prayer be this, "God bless you both."

Clement Scott.

THE THEATRE.

Theatrical Richmond.

By Austin Brereton.

THE speculative builder, the destroying angel of antiquity, has been particularly busy of late. He has penetrated into quiet, remote, and ancient villages, where he has laid heavy and irreverent hands on the lovely lands and substantial well-situated houses of our ancestors, erecting in their place cheap and draughty—if not "cheap and nasty"—stucco villas. This matter-of-fact gentleman has a friend and ally in many a country rector who has "restored" his church out of all recognition, leaving only the old tower, with its sun-dial, as a memorial of times gone by. We live in an age of progress indeed; an age which apparently bears no remembrance of the past and no thought of to-morrow. There are many old towns in England quite untouched by the ruthless destroyer of historical mementoes; but these, alas, are being swept away gradually, but still, surely. Nowhere is the improvement of the moderns more manifest than in the world-famed Richmond of Surrey. The old Palace of Shene, where Henry VII. and Queen Elizabeth died, where Wolsey kept Christmas in high and mighty fashion, and in front of which the young and lovely, but frolicsome, Duchess de Chevreuse swam across the Thames, has long since been abolished. The church, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, has been twice restored and enlarged, and the graves of the dead who lie there have, in many cases, been obliterated, while yet a further alteration in the structure is contemplated. The old and famous taverns, with a number of the old dwelling-houses, have been either destroyed entirely or reconstructed. Last of all to go was the old theatre on the Green. It is with the theatre and the theatrical associations of Richmond that I am most concerned and the history of which I propose to relate.

The "Richmond Wells" was the first place of entertainment here. Opened in 1696, for the sake of its medicinal spring, it flourished for over half a century. It was a favourite resort for jaded nymphs and their faithful swains. Concerts, card-playing, and raffling were the chief amusements indulged in here when the "quality" frequented the Wells. After 1750 the resort went to rack and ruin. The visitors drank copiously of something stronger than the medicinal waters, the company took to rowdyism, the quiet, genteel air of the Wells passed away, and, in 1780, the place gained such an unenviable notoriety that it was thought desirable to close it. Therewith an end. Two maiden ladies bought the buildings and speedily abolished them.

The drama has never flourished in Richmond, wealthy though the place is in theatrical associations. In the Assembly Rooms only is it now possible to give an entertainment. Yet Richmond has had, in its time, three theatres. The first of these was situated on the hill where York Place now stands. It was built on a piece of ground formerly used as a shed for asses; it was opened on June 6, 1719. The facetious Will Pinkethman, who died in 1725, once managed it. Here he and Henry Norris burlesqued the tragedy of "Cato." Pinkethman, like his successor, Ned Shuter, always took liberties with his audience, but was pardoned on account of his genial humour. "He's the darling of Fortunatus," wrote Downes, the prompter, in his "Roscius Anglicanus;" "he has gained more in theatres and fairs these twelve years than those that have tugged at the oar of acting these fifty." This theatre was, I imagine, not long in existence, for, in 1733, a new one was built on the hill, by Chapman, an actor. At this house Ned Shuter was a great favourite; from here Miss Barton, afterwards famous as Mrs. Abington, was engaged; and of a performance which he saw here Walpole wrote thus:—"I am just come from the play at Richmond, where I found the Duchess of Argyle and Lady Betty Campbell at their court. We had a new actress, a Miss Clough, an extremely tall and fine figure, and very handsome; she spoke very justly and with spirit. Garrick is to produce her next winter, and a Miss Charlotte, a poetess, and a deplorable actress. Garrick, Barry, and some more of the players, were there to see these new comedians. It is to be their seminary." Whether Garrick did bring out the handsome Miss Clough in town or not it is impossible to say. But it is certain that the lady's name is not famous in

theatrical annals. In 1756, Colley Cibber's son, Theophilus, had the theatre. There being a difficulty about the licence he was obliged to resort to strategy in order to evade the law. Accordingly, when, on July 8 of the year named, the theatre was re-opened it was advertised as a "Cephalic Snuff Warehouse," and the following remarkable advertisement concerning it was issued :—"Cibber and Co., Snuff Merchants, sell at their warehouse on Richmond Hill most excellent cephalic snuff, which taken in moderate quantities, in an evening particularly, will not fail to raise the spirits, clear the brain, throw off ill humours, dissipate the spleen, enliven the imagination, exhilarate the mind, give joy to the heart, and greatly improve and invigorate the understanding. Mr. Cibber has also opened at the aforesaid warehouse (late called the theatre), on the hill, an histrionic academy for the instruction of young persons of genius in the art of acting, and purposes for the better improvement of the performance of such pupils, and frequently with his assistance, to give public rehearsals, without hire, gain, or reward." In 1758 "the Duke of Cleveland and Southampton's servants" gave a performance here. The theatre fell into decay and was closed for theatrical purposes six years later, this temple of the drama being then used as a barn. Its site is now occupied by York Place.

Most famous in the theatrical annals of Richmond is the King's Theatre, as it was first called, which, until this year, stood at the North-West corner of the Green. It was built in 1765-6, by a lady named Horn, for a relative of hers, one James Dance, who is known to the stage under his assumed name of Love. The theatre opened in May, 1766, when a prologue, written by David Garrick, was spoken by Love. The unsophisticated nature of the latter gentleman may be gathered from the fact that in his advertisements he invariably announced that the entertainments would conclude early each night, "in order," as he put it, "to allow persons to reach London after the play is over." The idea of anyone going to Richmond from London to see a play performed is vastly humorous. Love was a favourite of Sir Horace Walpole's. His management of the Richmond Theatre extended from 1766 to 1773. He altered and produced here, Shakespeare's "Timon of Athens," in 1768, and Massinger's "City Madam," in 1771. He was by no means a success either as actor, manager, or dramatist, but his Falstaff was popular and was accounted a good performance. The first of the famous family of the Jefferson's was manager here

in 1774. Seven years later the theatre was rented by twelve tradesmen, who were dubbed by their town's-folk the Twelve Apostles. Lord Barrymore appeared here, in 1790, as Scaramouch, in "Don Juan," for Edwin's benefit. This house was never in a very flourishing condition. In thirty-nine years it had no less than thirty-seven managers, a fact which sufficiently testifies to its want of financial success. The theatre generally brought ruin to its managers, although Garrick, Macready, Young, Munden, Quick, Shuter, Liston, Mrs. Jordan, Edmund Kean, Mrs. Siddons, and Madame Vestris have, from time to time, played here. Dora Jordan lived at Richmond during the summer months, and frequently appeared upon the boards of its theatre. Here, on September 7, 1793, the elder Mathews made his first appearance on the stage. A fellow-enthusiast played Richard III., Mathews appearing as Richmond, and as Bowket in the farce of the "Son-In-Law." The companions paid fifteen guineas for the privilege of this appearance. "For the delight of my exhibiting my skill and legitimate love of the art [of fencing], I kindly consented," says Mathews, in his delightful "Life," "to take the inferior, insipid part of Richmond, who does not appear until the fifth act of the play—I stipulating, however, for a good part in the after-piece. I cared for nothing except the last scene of 'Richard,' but in that I was determined to have my full swing of carte and tierce. I had no idea of paying seven guineas and a half without indulging my passion. In vain did the tyrant try to die after a decent time—in vain did he give indications of exhaustion. I would not allow him to give in. I drove him by main force from any position convenient for his last dying speech. The audience laughed; I heeded them not. They shouted; I was deaf. Had they hooted, I should have lunged on in unconsciousness of their interruption. I was resolved to show them all my accomplishments. Litchfield frequently whispered 'enough,' but I thought, with Macbeth, 'damned be he who first cries 'hold, enough.' I kept him at it, and I believe we almost fought literally 'an hour by Shrewsbury clock.' To add to the merriment, a matter-of-fact fellow in the gallery, who in his ignorance took everything for reality, and who was completely wrapped up and lost by 'the very cunning of the scene,' shouted out at last: 'Hang it, why don't he shoot him?' The Duke of Clarence was in a private box with Mrs. Jordan on the occasion, having been attracted from Bushy by the announcement of an

amateur Richard, and I heard afterwards that they were both in convulsions of laughter at the prolongation of the scene, which that fascinating and first-rate of all great comic actresses never forgot."

Diddear, sometime a manager of the Richmond Theatre, had a cork leg himself, and was generally accompanied and waited on by a man servant who had two wooden ones! The most notable management of this theatre was that of Mr. Klanert, who, with his wife, performed the principal characters in their productions. This astute person made himself popular by giving a wherry, which was rowed for every August by local watermen. In the evening the successful competitor was carried in triumph on the stage, where he was presented with his prize by Mrs. Klanert, other prizes being distributed by Master Charles Klanert, who became a genial clergyman in his later days. Klanert first appeared at Richmond, under the management of Mr. W. R. Beverley, father of Mr. Beverley, the well-known scenic artist, in 1810. His own management extended from June 23, 1817, to November 10, 1829.

Edmund Kean often acted at Richmond under the Klanert management. The first record which I can find of his acting there is on October 17, 1817, when he was announced to play "for one night only," and, being under articles to Drury Lane, his full name was suppressed, and he was advertised as

MR. K. !!!

He played Sir Edmund Mortimer on this occasion, the receipts amounting only to £58 1s, out of which he received £40. During this engagement he also acted Bertram, Richard III., and Sir Giles Overreach. Manager Klanert always paid Kean before the conclusion of the performance. During this visit the actor brought with him from town some three or four boon companions, hangers-on to the great man. After he had been staying two nights at the "Castle," he sent a note to the manager, of which this is a copy :—

Dear Sir,—
Will you be kind enough to lend me ten pounds till Wednesday?
Yours, &c., E. Kean.
Castle Tavern,
— Klanert, Esq.

A year later Kean again acted at Richmond, the engagement proving still more remarkable than the former one. The night was October 14, 1818, the play "Richard the Third" (a biographer of Kean incorrectly gives the date as October 24, and the play as

"The Distressed Mother"), and the house held £77 19s. Klanert was the Richmond; the company was a good one (Benjamin Webster, then twenty years old, appeared as the Lord Mayor), and the tragedy was well acted all round. The audience bestowed their applause generally, whereat Kean became annoyed, and precipitately quitted the theatre at the close of the performance, without waiting, as was his custom, to chat with Klanert. There had been some conversation in the early part of the evening respecting another performance, so when the manager found that the actor had retired to the "Castle" he despatched a note, requesting him to fix the date and bill for the second night. Kean's reply was characteristic. Here it is:—

My Dear Sir,—

I have the greatest respect for you, and the best wishes for your professional success; but if I play in the Richmond Theatre again—*I'll be damned!*

Yours sincerely,

Edmund Kean.

— Klanert, Esq.

Kean's good-nature, however, soon got the better of him, and, despite his avowed determination never to act in Richmond again, he appeared on the 30th of the same month (October) for the benefit of a member of the company named Cunningham. He played Orestes in "The Distressed Mother," a piece little acted and comparatively unknown. The notice was very short, and the play consequently was got up in a great hurry. No rehearsal took place with Kean, the other actors knew but little of their characters and still less of their words. But Kean was at his best, and his acting drew forth as much applause as the little theatre was capable of producing. And Mr. Cunningham no doubt rejoiced when he heard that on the night in question over eighty-five pounds flowed into the treasury.

Kean lived at Richmond, in the little house adjoining the theatre, during the last months of his life. He died there on May 15, 1833. The painful closing scenes of his life here have been frequently related elsewhere. He was buried in Richmond churchyard, and over his grave a tablet to his memory was erected by his son Charles. Of this anon.

A vastly favoured piece during the Klanert management of the Richmond Theatre was a spectacular romantic drama, entitled "Tekeli; or, the Heroine of Montgartz." When the manager was in doubt this was his trump-card. He produced "Tekeli" with a

"real bridge," or "real water," or "real horses," or the firing of "real cannon," and always secured a good house with this bill. What, I wonder, has become of "Tekeli" now? In her charming, recently-published volume, "Shakespeare's Female Characters," Lady Martin has told us how, being then Miss Helen Faucit, she made her first appearance on the stage at the Richmond Theatre, in November, 1833, appearing as Juliet, Mariana in "The Wife," and Mrs. Haller in "The Stranger." During the succeeding half-century the Richmond play-house had a chequered career. The superior attractions of London, together with improved means of conveyance, rendered it hopeless for anyone to make it pay. The rent which, at the beginning of the century, was £250 a year, dwindled to nearly a fifth of that amount. The theatre fell from bad to worse. Only the other day a "leading actor" was offered half a pig's head and an old Dutch clock in lieu of salary. That actor took the pig's head, I believe, out of sheer starvation, but he abandoned the disorganised Dutch clock and the theatrical profession at one and the same time. The Richmond Theatre ceased to exist early this year. The ground whereon it stood has been cleared for building purposes.

Let us turn to the old church, where a group of actors lie in graves now almost indiscernible. First of the actors to be buried here was Joseph Taylor, who lived from 1585-1653. He was the second representative of Hamlet, a character which, according to Wright, in the "Historia Histrionica," he acted "incomparably well." His Iago was also considered excellent, and he was unmatched as Truewit in "The Silent Woman," and Face in "The Alchemist." In the year 1614 he was manager of a company of comedians at Richmond, who were known as the Lady Elizabeth's Servants. He was subsequently manager of the King's company, and Yeoman of the Revels to Charles I. His grave, of course, is unknown. Mrs. Yates, the celebrated tragic actress of Garrick's time, who died in 1787, and her husband, Richard Yates, a clever comedian, also rest here. They lie buried under the altar rail, at the south side of the chancel. But their monument is on the outer side of the northern chancel wall. It represents Yates, who was not of the most angelic temperament, meekly kneeling at the side of his wife, while on either side of the effigy is an extremely "proper" looking female figure. This is the second monument erected to Mr. and Mrs. Yates. The first

one possessed figures representing comedy and tragedy, but these, not being thought appropriate for a church, were moved, and their place taken by the modest, and meaningless, figures aforesaid. Another player, James Hearon, was laid to rest here. He lived at Richmond, and, after acting at Covent Garden, he walked home at night.

Edmund Kean, as all the world knows, is buried at Richmond. Intent on paying a tribute to his memory, I went to the church one beautiful evening this summer. The gates being locked, I enquired of a woman who was leaning out of a cottage-window hard by if she could tell me where the sexton lived, as I wished to go into the church. "The person," she replied, laying particular stress upon the word "person," "who keeps the keys lives next door," whereat she banged down her window and retired to the sanctity of her chamber, leaving me not a little surprised and amused. I immediately sought out the "person," who proved an elderly and very intelligent woman. She pointed out the tablet erected by Charles Kean to his father, but could not indicate with any degree of certainty the exact position of the actor's grave. Less than thirty years since the church was enlarged, many of the graves being built over in the process. Disappointed in the fruitlessness of my search, I had the good fortune to meet Mr. Henry Crisp, whose father, the late Richard Crisp, long a resident in Richmond, had made a plan of the various graves before the alterations. From this I found that Kean's grave is just outside the old church tower, at the southern side, and close to the wall where the new part of the building commences. To get at the position of the grave it is necessary to go into the church, where, above the place indicated, will be found a closet containing the implements used for cleaning the church. It is not a little significant of the stormy, unhappy career of the most brilliant actor who ever trod the stage, that a dust-hole should be made above his nameless grave. One more connection between Edmund Kean and Richmond remains to be stated. Here, those practised in the art of bringing objects of interest to the light of day, may discern a pair of the actor's buckles and the skull and sword which he used in "Hamlet." But as I have an eye to their possession, I shall not indicate their whereabouts more exactly.

A note on James Thomson, "sweet poet of the seasons," who died and was buried at Richmond, and I have done. Born at

Ednam, Roxburghshire, on September 11, 1700, he came to London a quarter of a century later, living first of all as a tutor in the City, afterwards in the West-End. His indolence is well known. "So charming Thomson," Mrs. Piozzi recorded, "wrote from his lodgings, a milliner's in Bond-street, where he seldom rose early enough to see the sun do more than glisten on the opposite windows of the street." The bard and James Quin formed a lasting friendship. When Thomson first came to London he was not over-burdened with cash, and he, not unnaturally, got into debt. One of his creditors imprisoned him. Quin, hearing of his misfortunes, visited him in the sponging-house in Holborn, ordered an excellent supper for two, and, when the glass had gone briskly round, delivered himself thus: "I read the other day your poem of 'The Seasons'; the pleasure which it gave me called forth my gratitude; it struck me that as I had some property, I ought to make my will, and to make those the legatees to whom I was under some obligation. Consequently I have bequeathed a hundred pounds to the author of the poem 'The Seasons.' This morning, hearing that you were in this house, I thought I might as well have the pleasure of paying the money myself, as order my executors to pay it when you would be no longer in need of it." Therewith the good-natured actor laid a hundred-pound note on the table. An offer so delicately and so timely made was not refused. Poet and actor left the house together, and the friendship thus cemented was never afterwards broken. Later on, in his poem "The Castle of Indolence," Thomson paid a tribute to his friend. Thomson's dramatic works never obtained much celebrity. They died, indeed, almost at their birth. "Sophonisba," his best-known play, was acted in 1729, when a feeble line, "O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!' was parodied by a wag in the pit, who exclaimed "O Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!" "Agamemnon," acted at Drury Lane in 1738, when Pope was present, was only endured. His "Edward and Leonora" was refused a licence in 1739. His masque of "Alfred," written in conjunction with David Mallett, a year later, was performed once. "Tancred and Sigismunda" was produced at Drury Lane in 1745. In 1748, on August 27 of which year Thomson died, his tragedy, "Coriolonus," was brought out at Drury Lane for the benefit of his sisters. The poet was a somewhat singular creature, inasmuch as he succeeded in keeping his wife secluded from the common eye, and made no mention of her existence to his friends.

Thomson frequently walked from London to Richmond. One summer evening, having overheated himself by walking, he took a boat from "The Doves" at Hammersmith, by which he went to Kew. The chill air of the river brought on a cold, and, eventually, a high fever. From this he partly recovered, when, again imprudently exposing himself to the weather, he relapsed, and speedily died. "Rosedale House," in Kew Lane, long his residence, still stands, but it has been altered almost past identification. "The Doves," however, at Hammersmith, is in much the same condition now as when Thomson frequented it. It is about three or four minutes' walk to the west of the suspension bridge. It is surrounded by a number of cheap tenements, and the coach-house formerly belonging to it has been turned into a dwelling-house; but even here Thomson's memory is perpetuated in a brass plate affixed to a door, on which is engraved, "The Seasons." The yard, facing the river, and the interior of the tavern, are unchanged since Thomson's day. In the quaint old tap-room there is a tablet which records the fact that on December 28, 1821, the tide flowed fourteen inches into the room. Here the ancient game of pigeon-holes, which resembles the modern bagatelle, is still played. Thomson was buried in Richmond Church, where the tablet which is supposed to indicate his grave is affixed to the wall at the north-west. As a matter of fact, Thomson's remains are below the place now occupied by the second bench at the south-west side.

Adrienne Lecouvreur.

By Frederick Hawkins.

PASSING through a narrow and crooked street of Paris, the Rue Férou, on the southern side of the Seine, late in a winter evening in 1710-11, one might have been taken aback, if not seriously alarmed, by a tremendous roar of applause from behind the closed windows of a grocer's shop. It is of importance to inquire into the cause of that unexpected demonstration. Eight years previously, be it premised, a hatter of Fismes, having failed in business there, came to Paris with four children, the eldest of whom, Adrienne, born in 1690, had shown a marked aptitude for reciting scraps of dramatic poetry. Establishing himself in the Faubourg St. Germain, within a few minutes' walk of the Comédie Française, he prospered to a greater extent than he could have anticipated, and Adrienne often found herself by his side in one of the two theatres which the King permitted to exist in the capital. For the drama pure and simple, as may be supposed, she soon evinced a decided preference. No pleasure was comparable in her eyes to the performance of a tragedy by his majesty's players, and the blood would rush to her face as, in the grandiose style recently introduced, they rolled forth the inimitable tirades of Corneille and Racine. Might she not aspire to a place among the daughters of Molière? Might she not eclipse the too theatrical Duclos by adopting the comparatively natural method of Ponteuil? Eventually, with her father's consent, she joined a band of young persons who played tragedy and comedy in private houses to gatherings of their friends. Fortified by a little experience, she appeared as Pauline in "Polyeucte" on a stage improvised in the grocer's shop in the Rue Férou, and the burst of enthusiasm referred to was evoked by her impersonation of that supremely difficult character.

Hearing of this achievement, Madame la Présidente Lejay, a well-known votary of fashion, invited the amateur players to perform

"Polyeucte" and "Le Deuil" at her house in the Rue Garancière. Brilliant indeed was the audience she collected to witness their efforts. Members of the proudest families in France occupied the foreground in the parterre, while a few distinguished men of letters and actors were to be seen in the rear. If some of the company on the stage grew nervous on facing such an assemblage, as they probably did, they lost by contrast with the heroine of the hour. Barely twenty-one years of age, yet quietly confident in herself, Adrienne Lecouvreur—for that was her full name—went through her trying task with an earnestness and grace which, though unaccompanied by much of the art required to express her ideas, could not fail to create a profound impression. But the professional actors present were struck with more dismay than admiration. By tolerating such performances, they thought, the Comédie Française, already weakened by the rivalry of the Opéra and the Théâtres de la Foire, would experience further injury. Consequently, leaving the house at the end of "Polyeucte," they were so far unmindful of the laws of hospitality as to have an interview with the Lieutenant of Police on the subject. D'Argenson's stern face seemed to become sterner when he heard their complaint. Madame Lejay was doubtless a very estimable sort of lady, but the exclusive privileges conferred upon the Comédie Française by the royal decree of 1680 must be upheld at all hazards. He gave orders that the performance in the Rue Garancière should be stopped without delay. In the space of a few minutes, just as the curtain was about to rise on "Le Deuil," these orders were delivered to Mdme. la Présidente by an exempt and other officers of police. Expostulation being useless, the preparations for the afterpiece had to be abandoned, however eager the majority of the audience may have been to see whether Mdlle. Lecouvreur was as much at home in comedy as in tragedy.

Fired by their success, the amateurs obtained possession of a building in the enclosure of the Temple, beyond the jurisdiction of the terrible Lieutenant of Police, and there represented "Polyeucte" with daily increasing effect. Meanwhile, it appears, Mdlle. Lecouvreur had recourse for technical instruction to the actor Legrand, who eked out his income from the Comédie Française by preparing young persons of both sexes for the stage. Laplace, in his collection of things not generally known, gives an entirely erroneous account of the relations between the master and the pupil.

Legrand, it is here stated, was suddenly deserted by a young and pretty mistress, for what reason he could not divine. Dining with the Marquis de Courtauvaux a month afterwards, he found her at the head of his host's table, apparently without a pang of remorse for her infidelity. Never deficient in self-possession, he allowed no sign of surprise or mortification to escape him, and, after remaining in the house until a late hour, asked the Marquis and his new acquaintance to dine with him on a specified day. Both came; and the lady had the mortification to discover that Legrand, far from having taken her infidelity to heart, had already put in her place a girl much superior to herself in looks, taste for dress, charm of conversation, and also a sort of merry impudence. Laplace supposes that this girl was no other than Adrienne Lecouvreur. In point of fact, however, she was the daughter of the dramatist-player's laundress, and was as different from the earnest-minded young actress of the Temple as anyone could be. For the rest, Adrienne did not remain under the tuition of Legrand very long. Her comrades having quarrelled among themselves, as amateurs often do, she became a player by profession, chiefly at the theatres in the east of France, with a determination to lose no opportunity of fitting herself for a triumphant career at the Comédie Française.

Idolised by the playgoers of Strasburg, where her gifts first found full expression, Adrienne Lecouvreur began a *début* in Paris on the 14th of May, 1717, as Monime in "Mithridate." Every corner of the house was occupied, for many persons remembered the girl whose performances in the Rue Férou and at Madame Lejay's were so rich in promise of future excellence, and her career in the north-east had of late been too brilliant not to be heard of in the capital. High-flown as they may have been, the expectations thus aroused were rather exceeded than disappointed. From the moment she came on the stage a species of enchantment stole over the audience. In herself, for one thing, she was a vision of grace. Her countenance had an almost ideal beauty; her dark eyes glanced from one personage to another with peculiar force of expression; her figure, if not so tall as might have been wished, was symmetrical enough to delight a painter or sculptor. And the favourable impression produced by her external advantages appreciably deepened as the performance went on. Her style of elocution had little or nothing of the stiltedness and formality still cultivated at the theatre.

Breaking the measure of her verses, though not without giving to each its full weight and meaning, she steadily aimed at the highest degree of natural truth under the conditions by which the tragic player was then fettered. Her action, too, was marked by the most dignified and fascinating simplicity. Five or six years previously this method would have created a dangerous prejudice against her, but the efforts of Quinault-Dufresne to reintroduce it had already begun to take effect, and a new susceptibility to its attractions went with a necessary admiration of the young actress's moral courage to facilitate her progress. It soon became evident that in her a worthy successor to Desœillets and Champmêlé had arisen. Her acting was rich in qualities seldom found in combination—judgment, sensibility, taste, the art of concealing art, and last, but not least, a peculiar warmth of imagination. Burst after burst of applause rang through the theatre, and no such tumult of enthusiasm as that which followed the descent of the curtain had been witnessed there for many years. Nor did the heroine of the night fail to confirm the advantage she had gained. Feeble in body, yet able to deliver with superb effect such passages as Camille's imprecation against Rome, she went from triumph to triumph, associated her name with a large variety of characters in tragedy, and became the most popular member of a company in which the highest histrionic capacity of the nation was supposed to be represented.

Mdlle. Lecouvreur occupied this proud position for thirteen years, succeeding from the outset in raising the social status of the actress to a higher point than it had yet reached. If anything, her fame was greater after the beginning of 1720, when Michel Baron, the most illustrious player of the Golden Age, returned to the theatre. Each sought to outvie the other, and the result of the comparison between them was seldom to the disadvantage of the younger. In new plays, as may be supposed, Adrienne found less inspiring employment than in the established repertory. None of the dramatists who flourished in her time came up to the level attained by Corneille and Racine. But Voltaire's "Hérode et Marianne," at least in the form it ultimately assumed, enabled her to achieve a triumph not soon to be forgotten. It was expressly for her that he wrote this impressive tragedy, and there is reason to believe that she once joined him in the country for the purpose of possessing herself of his ideas as to how the principal character should be

played. "Pay a visit," he writes from Rouen to his friend Thiériot in Paris, "to Mdlle. Lecouvreur, and tell her that if she is to drink asses' milk this season she must hasten her journey. Do not forget to add that I am delighted at the prospect of spending a little time with her." Illness caused her to defer again and again the production of the piece. "I am sadly afraid," the poet writes to another of his multitudinous correspondents, "that Mdlle. Lecouvreur will not be equal to the task of playing Marianne. She loses blood to an extent which terribly weakens her fragile body." Early in 1724, however, the tragedy was brought out at the Comédie Française, Adrienne and Baron representing the principal characters. It then failed; but Voltaire was so quick to perceive and remedy its defects that in the following year it met with a very different reception. "The crowds which besiege the theatre," says the Mercure, "are astonishing. Two-thirds of the boxes are always let in advance. The spectator is interested, moved, and often lost in admiration," thanks in a large measure to the acting of Mdlle. Lecouvreur as the heroine. Nor was this the only occasion in which she gave Voltaire the benefit of her talents. In 1726, though less fitted for comedy than tragedy, she imparted a new charm to his little court piece, "L'Indiscret," by a refined and skarkling impersonation of the lady who punishes a boastful lover by deserting him.

Mdlle. Lecouvreur died in the spring of 1730, in the fortieth year of her age. The circumstances attending the event have so often been distorted by fiction that it may be well to set them forth with particular care. Falling scarcely below accepted standards of morality in those days, she was the mistress of Maurice de Saxe, the only man, we are assured, to whom she ever gave her affections. Her very soul seems to have been centred in this unscrupulous but fascinating soldier. For him no act of self-denial on her part could be too great. In 1726, when he needed money to support his pretensions to the duchy of Courland, she sold her plate and jewels to send him 40,000 livres, though well knowing that her chances of getting back the money were at best slight. Even the remembrance of this generosity, however, could not prevent the future Marshal from inflicting upon her what he must have known would be a death-stab. He allowed himself to be drawn away from her by the Princesse de Bouillon, who was equally captivated by his manly graces, and who, as indifferent to considerations of family as to those of self-

respect, became his acknowledged mistress. One evening, perhaps wishing to exult over the anguish of the actress, this high-born lady presented herself in the stage-box at the Comédie Française during a performance of "Phèdre." Maddened by the sight of her victorious and smiling rival, Mdlle. Lecouvreur, then in the third scene of the third act, turned full upon her in delivering the lines:

> Je sais mes perfidies,
> Œnone, et ne suis point de ces femmes hardies
> Qui, goûtant dans le crime une tranquille paix,
> Ont su se faire un front qui ne rougit jamais.

Many of the audience, aware of the relations in which they stood to each other, broke into a roar of approving applause; and the Princess, incensed at the application to her of such lines, abruptly left the theatre. But the excitement of the scene was too much for a frame so enfeebled by consumption and grief as that of Mdlle. Lecouvreur. Not long afterwards, on March 15, she unconsciously took a final leave of the Comédie in "Œdipe" and "Le Florentin," struggling in each piece against manifest pain. Five days after that, at her house in the Rue Marais St. Germain, she died "comme une chandelle," with Voltaire at her bedside. If a rumour of the time had had any foundation, the Princesse de Bouillon, in revenge for the indignity put upon her in the theatre, had sent her, by a petit Abbé, a box of poisoned confectionery, which she unsuspiciously ate; but Voltaire, who had the body opened, explicitly tells us that the story was destitute of truth.

The widespread sorrow aroused by the news of Adrienne Lecouvreur's death was soon to be blended by a feeling of something like stupefaction. Mindful, perhaps, of Molière's reply to the offer of a seat in the Academy on the condition that he abandoned the stage—"I will not insult a profession which I love, and to which I owe all, by purchasing advantages at the cost of throwing a slur upon it"—she had passed away without renouncing her art; and the Curé of St. Sulpice, supported by the Archbishop of Paris denied a Christian sepulture to her remains. For a time it was hoped this grim decision would not be adhered to. Few could think without a shudder of such bigotry and intolerance being shown in the case of a woman who had brought to the work of her life an assemblage of gifts as rare as the poetry they served to illustrate, who for thirteen years had been the leading representative of an institution subsidised by the State, and whose private character, measured by the standard of her age, might have been

pronounced irreproachable. Molière, the greatest of French writers, was indeed sleeping in unconsecrated ground, but the Church might have become wiser and more generous in the fifty-seven years which had elapsed since his death. Unfortunately for the clergy, this expectation was not borne out by the event. No remonstrance or entreaty could divert the Archbishop from his fell purpose, although, with an inconsistency only too frequent in the history of the relations between the Church and the stage in France, he accepted and distributed a bequest made by the deceased actress to the poor. Accordingly, at midnight on March 21, 1760, the body of Adrienne Lecouvreur, long the cynosure of all eyes in theatre and *salon*, was conveyed in an old hackney-coach to the corner of the Rue de Bourgogne and the Rue de Grenelle, on the south bank of the Seine, and there, without the semblance of a sacred rite, but amidst many heartfelt benisons, no doubt, from a group of friends looking mournfully on, interred by two street porters in a shallow grave by a timber yard. Except an uninscribed stone post, no indication of her last resting-place could be raised on the spot, which chanced to be known as La Grenouillère.

As might be expected, this cynical and defiant outrage was keenly resented by a people devoted to the theatre, enthusiastic about their favourites, and already free to a large extent from what they termed superstition. Denunciations of the tyranny and intolerance of the priesthood were to be heard in all quarters. By no one was the popular sentiment more fully shared than Voltaire. His susceptive and generous nature seems to have been stirred to its very depths as he thought of that nocturnal scene in the Rue de Bourgogne. He had been one of Adrienne's warmest admirers and friends, and his old antipathy to Roman Catholicism had increased rather than diminished with observation and experience. Months afterwards, but still in a white heat of passion on the subject, especially when he contrasted the indignity put upon the actress's remains with the burial in Westminster Abbey of Mrs. Oldfield, he wrote a set of eloquent verses "Sur la mort de Mdlle. Lecouvreur," though for private circulation only. He was then at Rouen, whence he sent a copy of them to his friend Thiériot in Paris. In his own words, they were "remplis de la juste douleur que je ressens encore de sa perte, et d'une indignation peut-être trop vive sur son enterrement, mais indignation pardonnable à un homme qui a été son admirateur, son ami, son amant, et qui, de plus, est poëte." "Son

amant" is often taken to mean that she had been his mistress, but the inference is as much opposed to probability and ascertained facts as are one or two stories to her disadvantage. M. Thiériot, of course, proudly recited the ode in salons and cafés, where it necessarily created a profound sensation. For this little poem, in addition to having a force of philosophy and style seldom met with in literature, amounted to an open declaration of war upon the whole fabric of ecclesiasticism. In effect, as Condorcet says, the the poet loudly reproached a frivolous nation for its cowardice in submitting to the "shameful yoke" imposed upon it by the Church.

Ah! verrai-je toujours ma faible nation,
Incertaine en ses vœux, flétrir ce qu'elle admire;
Nos mœurs avec nos lois toujours se contredire;
Et le Français volage endormi sous l'empire
De la superstition?

No student of the history of the eighteenth century requires to be told how that question was answered.

Pantomime.—The inventors of this art were two obscure Romans, named Pylades and Bathyllus, who were rivals in the profession, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar. Pantomime was the name given to the performer, not to the piece, and the admiration bestowed on this rank and species of comedian was, at one time, carried beyond that given to any other performer. Cassrodorus has thus designated them—"Men whose eloquent hands had a tongue, as it were, on the top of each finger. Men who spoke while they were silent, and who knew how to make an entire recital without opening their mouths. To them there was no necessity for articulation in order to convey their thoughts." Pantomime was introduced to the English stage by Mr. Weaver, at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1702. It was called the "Cheats; or, the Tavern Bilkers." In 1717, the first harlequinade was performed at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, called "Harlequin Executed." It was composed by Rich. He possessed great talent and taste in this department; gained popularity by his own performance of Harlequin, under the name of Mr. Lun Junior. Rich produced pantomimes with great splendour at Covent Garden.

The Stage and Society.

By H. Savile Clarke.

THE question of the social status of the actor has come before the public again in an account of an interview with Mr. Corney Grain, the popular mimic and entertainer. It seems that the interviewer asked Mr. Grain the following "leading question": "Then you are not prepared with opinions as to the social status of the dramatic and musical professions?" To that Mr. Grain replied, pertinently enough, that a great deal of nonsense was talked on the matter, but that as far as he could see the higher artists were well treated formerly; that Garrick enjoyed quite as good a position as Mr. Irving, and finally he said, "the position of the artist is very much what he makes it. If he is a gentleman he is treated like one. If he is vulgar or conceited he is ignored." Thus far Mr. Corney Grain, who speaks with shrewd good sense, but who does not throw any new light on the subject, nor does he quite answer the rather puzzling interrogation put to him. For the demand of the interviewer begs the question. He asks for opinions as to the social status of the actor and musician, when the answer of a great many people would be that *as* actor and musician they have none at all, and as a matter of fact such people would be right. For the actor and musician has no status from his profession, like a barrister or a clergyman. If he is distingushed he no doubt is received in society, but if not he gains no social consequence from his profession, whereas we know that the veriest little snob who ever scrambled into the Church by a side door, as it were, and drops his aitches profusely, is often received on the footing of a gentleman by virtue of his cloth. That is denied to the man of motley and the man of notes. If he wins, he wins in spite of his profession, not because of it, and his position even then springs rather from his eminence than from the art in which he is distinguished. For these are the days of the worship of notoriety of any kind. Be as meritorious as you please, but if your light be

hidden under a bushel you might as well have no brains at all, and as far as the world is concerned never have done anything. But be particularly clever in any way, and take care to let it be widely known, and society, which is desperately tired of itself, will welcome you as a new sensation, and, though a little patronisingly perhaps, will make much of you. Who so much *en évidence*, then, as the popular actor? And hence the vogue which he obtains now-a-days. It is a tribute to the success he has won, and not to his art, as is proved by the want of discrimination shown by the public in their patronage of the theatre. A man or a woman who is a great artist fills a house in a poetical play, and optimists are delighted, and talk of the revival of the higher drama and the acknowledgment of the claims of genius. But the artist goes, and a vulgar play with a vulgar exponent comes next, or a lady whose claim upon the attention of the audience rests mainly upon photographic grounds, and still the theatre is crowded, and the pessimists have an innings, and declare with perfect truth that so long as anything is sufficiently puffed and advertised, so long will the public run after it. That, of course, is not the fault of the conscientious actor, though he may at times reflect a little bitterly on the blindness of the many-headed beast, and feel that his finest touches are wasted upon a public which is just as ready to applaud a performance which is wholly lacking in them. Such men must console themselves with the remembrance that—

> An artist, sir, should rest in art,
> And waive a little of his claim;
> To have the great poetic heart
> Is more than all poetic fame.

A further question now obtrudes itself, which may be put thus: Granted that his calling confers no distinction upon an actor or musician, does it act as a bar to his social advancement, does it, so to speak, handicap him? In the case of the actor (the musician has better chances) his profession certainly does *primâ facie* militate against his social success, and this can be proved by the complaints of actors themselves. Not very many years ago a gentleman who had gone upon the stage was good enough to write an article and say that he found that by doing so he had lost caste, and that his gentility had thereby suffered. The complaint was a rather unmanly one, and there were not wanting sarcastic answers implying that the writer must have had very little gentility to lose, with the stereotyped

remarks about fouling your own nest, and so forth. Nevertheless, it was in the main well founded. We know with what disfavour the player's occupation was regarded in old days, and though the prejudice has to a great extent worn off, still it does exist even at the present time, and is not without its effect upon the profession. A man does not step at a bound into the highest places on the stage; nay, in nine cases out of ten it is probable that he will never become famous at all; and can there be a greater contrast between the position of the undistinguished actor and that of the man who stands in the front rank of the profession? Where is your status when playing a fairly good part in the country, or minor *rôle* in London, if you did not possess it before you went upon the stage. Who are your companions on an ordinary country tour, and are they ever likely to have any social status at all, either in the profession or out of it? Let some of the many aspirants to stage honours obtain honest answers to those questions from people who have had experience, and there will be much less twaddle talked about the social status of the actor than heretofore. The prejudice against the stage is disappearing, as said above, but when we come to the reason, it is not easy to distinguish between cause and effect For the fact is that it is disappearing because a number of well-born, well-bred, and well-educated young men and women are going on to the stage, and they are venturing on that career because the prejudice is to a certain extent dying away. Of course, there are other reasons, personal vanity being among the most potent, but still, the social recognition obtained by the best artists on the boards has a good deal to do with winning them eligible recruits. It is by no means clear that the stage is strengthened artistically by the advent of well-dressed young men and women with but feeble ideas of characterisation, and none at all of elocution; indeed, there are old actors who will tell you with savage growls that the new order of things is productive of no good at all; but that is going too far. It is surely all the better for the stage that the bibulous Bohemian of old days is giving place to the gentlemanly and cultivated actor so frequently to be met with now, who brings to the service of the drama gifts which would have won recognition in any other walk of life. So we come to Mr. Grain's statement that the position of the artist is very much what he makes it, and if he happens to be a gentleman he is treated like one, while the very fact that such should be the

case shows that the profession has made in these later days great strides towards as full a recognition as its warmest admirers would desire for it.

How far that recognition should extend is a matter upon which there must necessarily be many differences of opinion. The three learned professions win honours of all kinds, and letters, art and music are not without their pecrages, baronetcies, and knighthoods. Is nothing, then, to be done for the stage save the somewhat tardy acknowledgment of the fact that a man may be a gentleman even though he happens to be an actor? There are those who say that is enough, and the reason sometimes given is more ingenious than convincing. It is said that the art of the actor is, like his fame, a purely ephemeral thing; that it only influences his generation, and dies with him, whereas the book or the picture or musical composition may live on for ever. But surely the generation that derives pleasure from histrionic art may well bestow honours on its highest exponents, especially as the memories and traditions of great acting live on from one generation to another. For my own part, it seems unfair to confer a well-merited knighthood upon Sir Arthur Sullivan and deny the same honour to the very original genius of Mr. W. S. Gilbert. Similarly, one can see no reason why we should not have Sir Henry Irving as well as Sir Frederick Leighton, while Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Toole are surely much more worthy of knighthood than the provincial mayors who happen to present addresses during a Royal visit. Nor need those who agree with these views be without hope that even in our own generation we may see the actor placed on an equality in this respect with the painter and the musician. "The Constitution," says Blackstone, "entrusts the Sovereign with the sole power of conferring dignities and honours, in confidence that he will bestow them upon none but such as deserve them." And to the Sovereign we must appeal. Unhappily, the terrible shadow which fell upon the Sovereign's life prevented Her Majesty from continuing that judicious and kindly patronage of the theatre which distinguished the early years of her reign. But the Prince Consort, if still among us, would have been foremost, as he was when living, in the recognition of artistic merit of all kinds, and the Prince of Wales is well known as one of the most enthusiastic and discriminating patrons of the drama. Thus we are not without hopes that justice may be done in this matter. Of course, only those who are highest in the pro-

fession should be selected as the recipients of titular honours, and their personal characters and antecedents should be carefully taken into account, as well as their histrionic abilities. With such due limitations, impartial criticism can surely give no reason why the art of the actor should not receive as full acknowledgment as that of the professors of painting and music.

A Kentish Memory.

"Si jeunesse savait! . . ."

Bluebells plucked by a kindly hand,
And sent me here amid the city's roar.
A dream of a vanished Fairyland
Awakes at the sight, and a boy once more,
With the world one dazzle of gleam and shine,
I am rousing the echoes with laughter shrill,
For with soft clinging fingers clasped in mine,
I am wandering over Bluebells Hill.

We snatch at the flowers in our careless glee,
And weave of their willowy stalks a crown;
Then, with never a thought of the days to be,
We tire of our treasure and trample it down.
While I wave the bells in her upward face,
And prove her, by logic I vow to be wise,
That the daintiest flower in the shadiest place
Is paled by the blue in her beautiful eyes! . . .

. . . Just a sigh for the thoughts of the Bluebells Hill,
And the dear old days in the Kentish lanes,
When a girl's soft voice made my senses thrill,
And the hot blood leap in my boyish veins,
And silently laying the bluebells by
I turn to the books I had cast aside;
For their music's hushed with her parting sigh,
And their sweetness fled when my darling died.

M. E. W.

Recollections of German Theatres

By Charles Hervey.

In the course of a prolonged residence at Heidelberg in 1858-9, I profited largely by the opportunity of familiarising myself with the most popular productions of the German stage by a constant attendance at the local theatre. What I saw there during my stay included some two or three hundred pieces of every description, from the "Freischütz" and "Robert le Diable" to "Czar und Zimmermann" and the "Nachtlager," from the "Räuber" and "Faust" to the comedies of Benedix and Goerner and the "Possen" of Nestroy and Kalisch. Before entering, however, into any detail respecting this miniature temple of the drama, it may be well to state that at the period alluded to—and I am not aware that any change has taken place since—the theatres of the Duchy of Baden were five in number, namely, those of Carlsruhe, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Baden and Freiburg. The first was supported by the Grand Duke, and the second by the town; both were open during the entire year, and among the members of each company were artists of acknowledged merit, a few of whom were engaged for life, and the others only for a term of years. Edward Devrient was for a long time manager of the Carlsruhe theatre, and under his intelligent rule it enjoyed a high reputation throughout Germany as a school of dramatic art hardly inferior to that of Weimar in the palmy days of Goethe. Mannheim possessed an admirable orchestra, and the greatest attention was paid there to the minutest details of scenery and costume; I may particularly instance a performance of Weber's "Oberon," which, merely regarded as a panoramic spectacle, could scarcely have been surpassed at the Paris Opéra. The little theatre at Baden, when not occupied by French actors, was tenanted twice a week by a portion of the Carlsruhe company; while that of Freiburg (of which I cannot speak from personal experience) had, like the old university town in which I had taken up my quarters, its

winter season commencing in October, and closing at the end of April.

If the prosperity of the Heidelberg theatre had depended solely on the encouragement bestowed upon it by the indigenous population, its existence as a place of entertainment would have been an impossibility, and bankruptcy the certain fate of any enterprising individual foolhardy enough to embark his capital in so hazardous a venture. Except on rare occasions, when the engagement of a popular star or, to use the technical term, "Gast," woke up the townspeople from their habitual lethargy, and tempted even the grave professors to emerge from their dens and *desipere in loco*, the only constant patrons on whom the manager could fairly count were the strangers, without whose support a beggarly account of empty boxes would have been the general rule. This very miscellaneous and cosmopolitan colony, comprising natives of almost every civilised land, responded cheerfully to the appeal of the Herr Direktor, and enabled him—provided that he were judiciously economical in the matter of salaries—to get through his seven months' season, if not with profit, at least without actual loss.

It must be owned that the prices of admission were as moderate as the thriftiest playgoer could reasonably desire ; the cost of a box ticket on ordinary nights being one and eightpence, and that of a stall ("sperrsitz") fifteen pence halfpenny. Most of the boxes and stalls were let to subscribers for the entire season (seventy-two representations) at a reduced rate, the lessee of a stall paying only thirty-six florins for the whole term, or about elevenpence for each night of performance. This scale of prices was slightly augmented when the arrival of a star entailed extra expense on the management ; the ticket-holders having the option of retaining their places on the payment of a small additional sum or not, as they chose. The theatre, situate in the street bearing its name, was capable of accommodating from seven to eight hundred persons ; it had no pretension to architectural beauty, and the aspect of the interior would certainly have been improved by the application of a few coats of paint ; the seats, however, were roomy, and, what is far from being always the case in a provincial town, every one in it could see and hear. Except on Sundays, when a long piece *à spectacle* was invariably given, and the curtain consequently rose half an hour earlier than usual, the performance commenced at half-past six or seven and terminated before ten, so as to allow the

male portion of the spectators time to enjoy their nightly sitting at the *Kneipe* until eleven o'clock struck, when the green-coated policeman quietly walked in and turned them out.

During my stay, no less than three managers successively held the reins of government, respectively denominated Kramer, Zimmer, and Friese. The first, previous to my arrival, had brilliantly inaugurated his campaign, thanks to a magnet of attraction in the person of Miss Lydia Thompson, whose "pas de matelot" (*Anglice* hornpipe) so enraptured "Messieurs les Etudiants" that, while her engagement lasted, the members of the various corps, Prussians, Westphalians, Suabians, etc., contrary to their wont, abandoned with one accord the "Commers" for the theatre, and vied with each other in enthusiastic admiration of the "bright, particular star." The remainder of the season proving tolerably prosperous, Herr Kramer prudently retired from his post with a balance in his favour; but, in the following year, forgetful of the old saying, "*Qui trop embrasse mal étreint*," rashly resumed his managerial functions at Mainz, where he and his company came to irremediable grief, and were greeted with shouts of derision and an avalanche of rotten apples. Our next impresario was a dancing master by profession, utterly unversed in dramatic matters, but blandly courteous in manner, and reminding one, by the ineffable grace of his bow, of the illustrious Simpson of Vauxhall notoriety. How he contrived to make both ends meet was to me a mystery, his administrative faculty being absolutely *nil*, and the majority of his actors hardly coming up to the standard of the troop of Ragotin in the "Roman Comique." At one moment, moreover, owing to certain engagements having unexpectedly fallen through, we were left without a baritone, a leading lady, a low comedian, and a soubrette; and yet, in spite of these deficiencies, Herr Zimmer, as regardless of obstacles as the traditional Guzman, persisted courageously in bringing out one after another, and often with a single rehearsal, "Don Giovanni" and "Norma," "Egmont" and "Cabale und Liebe."

One swallow, we are told, makes no summer, nor can it be truly said that the talent displayed by one member of the company entirely compensated for the shortcomings of the rest; but it certainly produced on us the effect of an oasis in the desert. A really good "ingénue"—is there, by the way, any corresponding term in our own stage vernacular?—is not, as far as my experience goes, to be met with every day; and one so admirably fitted for that line of

parts as Mdlle. Marie Mathes even the Comédie Française might have been proud to own. She was extremely pretty—no bad recommendation to start with—fair-haired, bright-eyed, and barely seventeen; a graceful and winning little creature, the "*joie de la maison*," both before and behind the curtain. Her story, poor girl, was a sad one, and the rest of her brief career may be summed up in a few words. Engaged in 1859 at Frankfort, she remained there three years, and in 1862 made a brilliant *début* at the Victoria Theatre in Berlin, playing Perdita, in "The Winter's Tale," to the Hermione of Madame Marie Seebach. A year later she became a member of the Burg-Theater in Vienna, the *ne plus ultra* of a German actress's ambition, and gradually worked her way to the top of the tree, the critics unreservedly declaring that in the parts hitherto monopolised by the celebrated Gossman she was superior to Gossman herself. In July, 1865, while starring at Berlin, she was suddenly attacked with brain fever, and died, universally regretted, on the twentieth of the same month, having barely attained her twenty-third year.

"Rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin!"

One unsuccessful season having proved enough for Herr Zimmer, who consoled himself for his failure by resuming the professional fiddle, his place was supplied by a certain Herr Friese, a sort of Maître Jacques, who, like the English country manager Thornton, of absent-minded notoriety, was ready at a pinch to go on for any part at the shortest notice. He was a queer little man, not without humour, and apt, when off the stage, to indulge in a *patois* of which no mortal save the initiated could understand a word; he had been all his life connected with theatricals, and generally contrived by some means or other that his weekly expenses should be more than covered by the receipts. His company, on the whole, was better than that of either of his predecessors, and included a very pleasing lady singer, an indefatigable actor of all work, and a capital low comedian; he had, moreover, the good fortune to make a decided hit by the engagement of three comical dwarfs, who played in Nestroy's "Possen" to crowded houses towards the end of the season. When that epoch arrived, Friese migrated with his actors, dwarfs and all, to Creuznach, where I had a passing glimpse at them in a *locale* more resembling a hay-loft than a theatre, and rejoiced to hear that they were doing excellent business.

Once a week a late return train enabled the inhabitants of Heidelberg to enjoy an evening's entertainment at Mannheim, and I profited frequently by the opportunity of witnessing the performance of dramatic masterpieces by a truly admirable company. On one occasion I was lucky enough to see Theodore Doering, the renowned Berlin actor, as Franz Moor in the "Räuber," a part in which he was considered to be unrivalled; although age had begun to tell upon him, his conception of the character was strikingly powerful, and nothing could exceed the perfection of his intonation and delivery. It is a curious fact, by the way, and worthy of note, that the version of Schiller's drama, as given at Mannheim, is the exclusive property of that theatre, where, indeed, it was originally played; the piece, when represented elsewhere, differing in many important respects from the genuine manuscript copy. Doering afterwards came to Heidelberg, and treated us to a marvellously fine performance of Sheva in an adaptation of Cumberland's "Jew," which, although long since forgotten here, is still a favourite stock-piece in Germany.

Among other stars who at various periods deigned to honour our little theatre with a taste of their quality were Friedrich Haase, then at the zenith of his celebrity, whom I saw in Brachvogel's "Narciss" and Benedix's "Alte Magister;" and Dr. Grunert, from Stuttgard, whose interpretation of the title part in Lessing's "Nathan der Weise" was remarkably effective. Haase, barring a slight tendency to over-act—a defect less apparent in comedy than in drama—was an artist of undoubted merit, equally at home in pathetic and humorous parts, and gifted with as clear and agreeably modulated a voice as I ever remember hearing on the stage. Besides these, we had two or three lady visitors, more or less personally attractive. Fräulein Scherzer, from Carlsruhe, a pleasing representative of George Sand's "Petite Fadette;" Fräulein Ottilie Genée, from Berlin, a kind of German Déjazet, who drew full houses with a repertory entirely composed of broad farce; and Fräulein Lund, from St. Petersburg, whose great card was the "Orphan of Lowood," in other words, "Jane Eyre." On these occasions, and particularly in the case of Fräulein Genée, the public of Heidelberg, contrary to custom, displayed a reckless prodigality in the matter of bouquets, which, it is to be hoped, somewhat consoled the fair ones for the lack of a corresponding liberality on the part of the manager.

In those days—long before the present Opera House had been even dreamt of—the free city of Frankfort possessed only one theatre,* still existing, but shorn of much of its importance since the erection of its imposing rival. My recollections of the Stadt Theater recall a handsome building, about as large as the Paris Opéra-Comique, adorned with busts of Goethe, Schiller, and other famous dramatists, a frescoed ceiling, and, as in the Scala at Milan, a small clock placed above the curtain. Exactly as the minute-hand pointed to half-past six, the curtain rose and the performance commenced. The theatre was managed by a committee, consisting of a president and two supplementary members; the prices were low, the usual cost of a stall being half-a-crown. At the period alluded to the office of stage manager was anything but a sinecure, the subscribers perpetually clamouring for novelty, and the most successful production rarely averaging more than a three nights, run. The company, operatic and dramatic, was very numerous, and included several artists of distinguished repute, such as Fräulein Janauschek (whom we have seen in London) and Schneider, an excellent comedian, who played the "Captain of the Watch" (Chevalier du Guet), as well as Lafont himself. I also remember a very droll actor named Hassel, whose favourite part was a certain "Hampelmann," figuring in a series of pieces written in the local *patois*, highly relished by the populace, but as incomprehensible to the unitiated as the "Pietsch" of Berlin, the "Staberl" of Vienna or the Florentine "Stenterello."

* Except a small open-air establishment in the suburb of Bockenheim

Random Recollections.

By Henry Turner.

THE first visit to a theatre is ever a memorable event. The Pavilion Theatre was my earliest experience of a dramatic temple. Two melodramas, "The Deserted City" and "The Brand of Crime," with the farce of "The Illustrious Stranger," were the bill of fare. When the curtain rose, and I beheld damsels of ravishing beauty, with their back hair down, standing in picturesque groups, and contemplating with mournful countenances the distant city, my delight knew no bounds. Truth compels me to state that the rest of the performance is obscured somewhat with the mist of years. But I remember there was a dumb boy, in respect of whom no arguments on the part of my elders would persuade me was endowed with speech. There was also a very amusing light comedian, whom I afterwards knew by the name of Rignold. He was renowned for his personation of the British sailor, especially in a drama called "Gallant Tom," wherein he enacted the part of protector to a very clever child, whose name was Loveday. I wonder if this lady was an ancestor of the courteous and obliging Mr. Loveday, of Toole's Theatre.

The personation by Rignold of the British tar was only second to that of T. P. Cooke. The lessee of the Pavilion at this date was a Mr. Farrell, who was succeeded by Mr. Denvil—known as "Manfred Denvil," from the excellence of his representation of the character of Manfred in Byron's drama. The most popular actor at that date was Charles Freer, who was known as "The Kean of the East." As a melodramatic actor—especially in such characters as Buridan, in "The Tower of Nesle," and the Gypsey King—he certainly deserved his fame. Some time in the forties, I saw him play, at the Victoria Theatre, the chief part in "The Bohemians of Paris," and followed by "Macbeth" as an afterpiece (!), wherein he enacted the ambitious Thane. But he was at this date merely a wreck of his former self, and shortly afterwards committed suicide

in a coffee-house near Westminster Bridge. I am convinced that any old professional who remembers Charles Freer in the Gypsey King will endorse my opinion of his great excellence in the part. He was also an admirable sailor and a suave and elegant Mercutio. Lest any of my readers imagine that I am unduly praising an actor who never succeeded in treading the boards of a West End theatre, I may remind them that "everybody's favourite," Fanny Stirling, was originally an actress at the Pavilion Theatre. *I* was once the victim of prejudice to *locale*, steadily resisting the entreaties of a friend—between the years 1849 and 1852—to go and see an actor at the Grecian Saloon, City Road, who, my friend assured me, was a marvel of histrionic genius. In 1853 every playgoer was a worshipper at the shrine of Robson! In 1842 I paid my first visit to a West End theatre. The Haymarket, at that time, had not introduced gas into the auditorium, the light being supplied entirely by *wax candles!* There was a clause in the then existing lease which prohibited the employment of gas. The effect was very charming, the soft, subdued light enhancing considerably the beauty of the feminine occupants of the dress-circle and private boxes, while the clusters of wax candles had all the appearance of an assemblage of stars. The first piece was a comedy by Dion Boucicault, entitled "Alma Mater." The press did not speak very highly of the production, and I suppose the critics were right, as the comedy, so far as I know, has never been revived. But the audience seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and the acting was capital. The elder Farren and Mrs. Glover, with H. Holl and Brindal, supported the principal parts, and there was a Mr. Malone Raymond, who played an Irish character. The best played part was a certain Count Pavé, of which Mr. Brindal (a second-rate actor) made an absolute creation. The concluding piece was "Tom Noddy's Secret," in which Strickland appeared. This performance lingers in my memory as unrivalled, being as elaborate and as finished as a miniature by Zincke or Petitot. Surely this representation of fatuous mental weakness was never surpassed by Munden or any actor of a bygone age! I must not omit to mention the remarkable change which has taken place in the length of a dramatic performance. The usual time for opening the doors of a theatre was six, commencing at half-past six, and frequently the last piece was in progress at midnight. I think the hour of the curtain rising at the Haymarket was never earlier than seven; but

I have frequently seen the farce of "John Jones" commence at 11.40. Nowadays, as the reader knows, the performance at St. James's, or the Lyceum, or the Haymarket, is barely three hours long—from eight till a quarter to eleven. At this period (1842) the Surrey Theatre, under the management of W. Davidge, was a very popular theatre, and well patronised. There was certainly plenty for the money, as the following bill of fare will show. The curtain rose at half-past six on a two-act drama, "Estelle Dumas," then followed a nautical play in four acts, "Poor Jack," and the evening wound up with a melodrama, "Blanche Heriot; or, The Chertsey Curfew." In the first piece John Webster, Mrs. R. Honner, W. Smith, and Miss Eliza Terry performed. Mrs. Honner was a prodigious local favourite. She had played some years previously at Sadler's Wells as Miss Macarthy in "Perourou, the Bellows Mender of Lyons"—the drama on which the first Lord Lytton founded his "Lady of Lyons." She was famous for her personation of Black-Eyed Susan in conjunction with Mr. T. P. Cooke. It seems but yesterday that I saw her trip down the practicable wooden staircase in the second scene of "Estelle Dumas," habited in a pretty Normandy peasant costume, while murmurs of admiration broke forth from the grocers' wives in the boxes—"Oh! isn't she a dear!" John Webster was as good-looking a fellow off the stage as he was on, which is saying a good deal. He was admirable in "The Brigand." W. Smith was a low comedian of the dry and stolid line. Miss Terry was a pretty soubrette, whose plumpness was a source of constant amusement. Unfortunately, this increased to an abnormal extent. In after years Miss Terry was playing in support of Mr. and Mrs. Sims Reeves, who were starring at the Standard in "Love in a Village," and when in a fit of grief and vexation she covered her face with her plump fingers, and exclaimed, "I shall bust!" the ladies and gentlemen of Shoreditch roared for several minutes, and even the great tenor could scarcely proceed. T. P. Cooke appeared in "Poor Jack" with Mrs. Honner again in support—actors worked hard in those days—also Neville as an old salt, and Heslop and Lewis, who afterwards became the husband of Miss Terry. J. Neville was, I think, the father of that admirable actor Mr. Henry Neville. "Blanche Heriot," the final production of the evening, was the first essay of Albert Smith in the dramatic line. As a native of Chertsey he was naturally acquainted with the local legend of the heroic girl who, in order to

gain time for her lover's pardon to arrive, and so save his head from "rolling on the Abbey mead," clung to the clapper of the enormous bell in the belfry tower, and thereby attained her object. Mrs. Honner was the heroine, and her portrait (life-size) was on every hoarding in London, swinging to and fro with her hair streaming in the wind. Two very popular actors appeared in this drama—Messrs. Hicks and Hughes, celebrated for their broadsword combats; hence the well-known saying, "Brayvo, Hicks!" which was shouted with stentorian power by his admirers of the New Cut and the gentlemen of the vicinity, while the partisans of his opponent vociferated, "Brayvo, Hughes!" Mr. Hughes afterwards migrated to the Adelphi, where he remained till his death. He was the father of that charming actress, Mrs. Gaston Murray, whose *début* I well remember at the Lyceum in "The Bachelor of Arts." Hicks's best part was the "Wizard of the Wave," in which he represented the pirate chief and the naval commander sent in pursuit of him. The changes of dress and "make-up" were rapidly executed, and the difference in manner between the cheery naval officer and the moody Wizard was well defined. There was a very clever rival to Mrs. Honner at the Surrey Theatre known as Mrs. Henry Vining. The popular Mrs. John Wood is her daughter. There was only one drawback to the pleasure experienced in witnessing her performance. Never by any chance did the manager allot her a character with a vein of cheerfulness in it, so that the spectator felt inclined to echo the remark of the man in the gallery at the Theatre Royal, Leeds, when witnessing the performance of Mrs. Siddons, "Drat that woman! She is always in trouble."

I can scarcely believe that upwards of forty years have elapsed since I "assisted" at the performance of "Martin Chuzzlewit" at the Lyceum. The adaptation of Dickens's celebrated novel by Edward Stirling was produced on July 8th, 1844. The prominent features were the admirable personations by Mr. and Mrs. Keeley of Sairey Gamp and Young Bailey. I have no desire to detract from the excellence of the late Johnny Clarke's assumption of the monthly nurse, but there was no comparison between the two renderings. Keeley always attained his effects by legitimate means, and when he made his first appearance, and walked slowly down to the foot-lights, candlestick in hand, looking the very embodiment of the part, he only recognised the peals of laughter, lasting several minutes, by a quiet glance of wonderment

at the tumultuous reception. And when his clever wife, costumed as a groom, exclaimed, flicking her top boots as she did so, and ogling the nurse the while, "Sairey, you are the remains of a fine woman," and Mrs. Gamp replied, "Drat that boy; I wouldn't be that boy's mother—no, not for fifty poun'," the effect was delicious. It was during the reign of the Keeleys at the Lyceum that Alfred Wigan laid the foundations of his well-merited fame. He played Montague Tigg in first-rate style. Frank Matthews, "with his hair standing up in three different Brutus's," might have stepped from the green covers of the novel, so exactly did he realise the conception of Phiz as Pecksniff. In those remote times there was an actor known as "Drinkwater Meadows." He was renowned for his execution of small character parts. Messrs. Thorne and Willard have achieved much distinction for their respective Tom Pinch's, but they must yield the palm to Meadows in the part, to whom the *Times*, in its critique, applied the epithet of "perfection." It was a Poniatowski gem. Miss Woolgar (known to the present generation as Mrs. Alfred Mellon) enacted Mercy Pecksniff in a truly pathetic manner. Emery also distinguished himself as Jonas Chuzzlewit. His scene in the wood, where he crosses the stile, after the murder of Montague Tigg, was exceedingly powerful. We have "Young Bailey" and "Merey Peeksniff" still with us.

The year 1844 was remarkable for the introduction of the dance known as the polka to our shores. At the Opera, Cerito and St. Leon danced the Redowa Polka in the *divertissement* called "La Vivandière" to admiring audiences. The Keeleys brought out a one-act piece, entitled "Polkamania," in which Alfred Wigan taught Miss Fairbrother the new dance. It is needless to say that the lady proved a most apt pupil, acquiring a perfect knowledge of the dance in a few minutes. The two servants, a maid and a page in buttons, were represented by the Keeleys, who watched through the open folding-doors the graceful movements of their mistress and her teacher. Their attempts to reproduce the steps of the dance were received by the audience with roars of laughter. It should be remembered that the polka at that date was a far more elaborate affair than it is in these days.

It was the same Miss Fairbrother who scored so well as the Captain of the Forty Thieves in "Open Sesame," a burlesque by Gilbert Abbott à Beckett, with which the Keeleys commenced their Lyceum campaign in April, 1844. I first saw Madame Vestris and

Charles Mathews in 1845, at the Surrey Theatre, where they were fulfilling a starring engagement. "Used Up" was the opening piece. Charles Mathews was then about forty-two years of age, and in the full possession of his remarkable powers. However wonderful may have been his efforts when a septuagenarian, those. individuals who only saw him at that period can form no idea of his excellence at the time of which I am writing. Dion Boucicault was the original adaptor of "L'Homme Blasé," and christened his version "Bored to Death." Prior to its production Mathews re-wrote a considerable portion of it, and gave it the title of "Used Up"—an incomparably superior title. In subsequent years this led to an action at law as to ownership in the case, "Webster *v.* Mathews." It remained undecided, and then Webster essayed the part of Sir Charles Coldstream—a performance which I rejoice to say I never beheld, as I should have been grieved to have my opinion of one of the most remarkable actors of this century lowered in the slightest degree. Some shallow critics preferred the creation of Webster, because in the second act he was a perfect ploughboy, whereas Mathews was still the disguised baronet. For years I defended the view of Mathews in this respect, and at length had the satisfaction of finding that no less a person than George Henry Lewes was of the same opinion. In his "Essay on Acting" he says that Sir Charles, in the second act, should be constantly endeavouring to personate a ploughboy, and *failing in the attempt.* It is well known that the make-up of Mathews as Coldstream was based on the personality of his old friend Count D'Orsay. In after years, he discarded this "make-up," much to the detriment of the piece. A short frock-coat, light trousers (with straps) covering the greater part of the boots, double-breasted white waistcoat, the shirt front entirely hidden by a black satin scarf, turn-down collar, and linen wristbands turned back over the coat-sleeves, light whiskers, curled inwards, and carried under the chin. The discarding of the extensive light wig and whiskers in the second act for a clean-shaven face and closely-cropped head naturally added much to the alteration of the runaway baronet when disguised as a ploughboy.

Madame Vestris appeared in "Grist to the Mill." She was at this date forty-eight years of age, but possessed all the grace and beauty of a woman of thirty, although she had been two and thirty years before the public in 1845. A great actress she certainly was not; but few women have possessed in a greater measure the rare

gift of fascination, combined with wonderful tact and powers of pleasing. Her singing of "Cherry Ripe" will never be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to hear it. There is no actress of the present day who at all resembles the Queen of Soubrettes. Her eyes and teeth were matchless, her arm a model for a sculptor, and men smoked pipes the bowls of which were reproductions of her instep and swelling calf! Mathews supported her in the drama, and also appeared as Captain Patter in "Patter v. Clatter." "Used Up" was first produced at the Haymarket in 1844. Of the original cast two only remain: Howe, who was the Ironbrace, and "Little Clark," who was the servant James. Some few months ago I saw a hearty-looking man, with a face tanned by an American sun and an Atlantic voyage, hailing a cab in the Strand. He was apparently not more than fifty-five, and yet I was looking at the original John Ironbrace of forty-one years ago.

1845 saw the production of Boucicault's comedy of "Old Heads and Young Hearts," in which Mathews and his wife played principal parts; Webster was excellent as Tom Coke, and *the* Farren admirable as Jesse Rural, taking care to speak the "tag," a point on which he always insisted. Hopes were held out by the Bancroft management during the present year that this admirable comedy would be reproduced; but the fates ruled otherwise. The personation of Lady Alice Hawthorne by Mrs. Bancroft would have been a pleasant memory and a joy for ever.

Our Musical-Box.

NOW that the feverish bustle of the season is over, and that London is no longer the scene of "society's" restless, fretful efforts to amuse itself; now that opera, concert and *matinée* announcements have vanished from newspaper advertisement columns; now that "gifted artists" have "ceased from troubling," and *dilettanti* are at rest; and that, as *Mr. Punch* aptly rhymes—

> "Ev'ry pianist, ev'ry vocalist is packing portmanteau—
> To convey to other climes his 'execution' or 'bel canto,'"

it may not be inopportune to accord some brief retrospective consideration to the past musical season. What have been its leading characteristics? What its achievements, recreative and educational? of what novelties has it been delivered? and what influence has it exercised upon the musical taste of the English public? These are questions which it is perhaps worth while to ask and attempt to answer, at a time of year when this huge metropolis, but for promenade concerts at Covent Garden, military bands at South Kensington, and the questionable "concords of sweet sound" produced by Italian grinders and German brass in "quiet" streets and leafy suburbs, is as forlorn of musical entertainments as a Swiss Alp or a Friendly Island.

Operatic enterprise has been represented during the 1885 season by Mr. Carl Rosa, at Drury Lane, and Colonel Mapleson, at Covent Garden; in the former case with unquestionable advantage to *impresario* and public alike; in the latter, I regret to say, with less satisfactory results. Mr. Rosa produced two works of considerable musical interest, new to London audiences; the one of native growth—Mr. Goring Thomas's "Nadeshda"—an absolute novelty, having been expressly composed for the English Opera Company; the other, Massenet's "Manon," an importation from abroad, which had achieved an unqualified success in the French capital, and therefore came to us already invested with the prestige of popular favour. Both these operas were well received by Mr. Rosa's metropolitan clients—so well indeed, that he found it to his interest to devote the majority of the nights at his disposal to their repetition. Of the two, the Englishman's work was in every respect the more valuable. The music of "Manon" is pretty, but lacking in force and originality;

whereas that of "Nadeshda" displays a far higher class of beauty, as well as considerable creative power. It is not only its composer's best production, but by far the most important of the English operas hitherto brought out by Mr. Rosa, all of which, unless I am much mistaken, it is destined to survive. Time will show. Meanwhile a musical season cannot be regarded as absolutely barren which has added to our national operatic *répertoire* so meritorious a work as "Nadeshda." With respect to Colonel Mapleson's *ad captandum* series of performances at Covent Garden, there is little to be said in their favour, save that they afforded to music-lovers several opportunities of hearing the finest singer in the world. Madame Patti's unique natural gifts and supreme mastery of the art of vocalisation were thrown into unusually high relief by the poor and feeble quality of the "artists" (with one or two shining exceptions, such as Madame Scalchi and Signor del Puente) engaged to co-operate with her; but, on the other hand, the audiences attracted to Covent Garden by the magic of her name could hardly fail to resent the bad taste that associated her with such an incompetent crew as Colonel Mapleson's scratch company, and put on the stage in so shabby a manner operas in which the legitimate Queen of Song was called upon to figure. I am willing to believe that the *impresario* did his best as far as the minor details of production were concerned, heavily handicapped as he was by the high salary of his chief attraction and other unavoidable expenses, amounting up to over £1000 a night; but the impression produced by the *ensemble* of his singers, scenery, costumes, and accessories was, to say the least of it, an infelicitous and deeply depressing one.

The past season was by no means propitious to operetta. Perhaps the rage for that particular class of musical entertainment which prevailed a few years ago is dying out; perhaps the novelties put forward were not possessed of sufficient intrinsic merit to catch and hold the public fancy. However that may be, the operettas produced this year in London for the most part failed to "draw" for a sufficient length of time to render them remunerative to the *entrepreneurs*, and, indeed, entailed serious pecuniary loss upon the lessees of theatres affected to the lighter branch of the lyric drama. The only "run" of any noteworthy length obtained by a piece belonging to this category was scored by the "The Lady and the Locket," in which Mr. Coffin, a young baritone singer of conspicuous merit, made a great hit. "Dick," despite its pretty music and diverting libretto, proved a failure, from the commercial point of view; so did "François the Radical," though it sparkled with melodic gems of unquestionable value and brilliancy. Had this operetta not had to contend against the baneful influence of a supremely silly "book" I cannot but think that it must have established itself solidly in public favour, so fresh and charming were several of its musical numbers. But the Fates were against it, in the shape of an inexpe-

rienced librettist; and so it vanished from the stage after having been played a few times to half-empty benches. With the exception of "Rip van Winkle" and "La Mascotte" there has not been a real "great go" in operetta for some years past—such, for instance, as was achieved in their time by "Madame Angot," "Les Cloches de Corneville," "Olivette," "Le Petit Faust," and "La Grande Duchesse." Since those palmy days one work after another, successful enough on the Continent, has been produced in London at great cost of money and pains, only to be withdrawn after a short run as hopelessly unremunerative. Such has been the ill-luck of several fairly good operettas, musically considered, e.g., "La Cosaque," "The Great Mogul," "Nell Gwynne," and one or two others. "Cymbia" was a really clever and pretty English work, but could not hold its own. "Boccaccio" and "Falka" paid their expenses, I am told, but brought little profit to the managements that brought them out. The revival of "Chilpéric" turned out little short of a disaster; and so, I fear, did that of "Barbe Bleue," which Offenbach himself regarded as his *chef-d'œuvre*. "The Beggar Student" was far from an unqualified success in London, but carried all before it in the provinces. True, it was cruelly mangled at the Alhambra, handicapped with the weight of meaningless ballets, and performed in a manner which I still shudder to think of; but the intrinsic beauty of the music entitled it to a happier lot than that which befel it. Unmutilated and thoroughly well performed "on tour" by the Carl Rosa Company, it drew crowded houses wherever it was played.

Concerts and *matinées* were as numerous in this metropolis—if not more so—during the spring and summer of 1885 as they had been throughout the far more brilliant musical season of the preceding year. But, even in the cases of those entertainments of this class which rank as "events," I noticed a falling-off in the attendance and in the social distinction of the audiences, that seemed to point to a diminution of interest in concert-room singers and players on the part of the fashionable world. As for the *matinées*—their name, alas! is legion—which are given year after year by needy artists on the "mutual assistance" principle, and the most salient characteristic of which is that they cost their givers nothing but the price of a few newspaper advertisements, and of a little curiously faulty printing, in connection with the "harmless, necessary" programme, the musical public during the past season appeared to fight more than usually shy of their sameness and tameness. They are indeed, for the most part, dismal affairs, and moreover levy a cruelly oppresive tax upon the time and good-nature of certain really distinguished and popular artists, who are invariably solicited to furnish gratuitous contributions to their otherwise slender attractions, and lack strength of mind to refuse to render services for which no equivalent whatever—that is worthy of consideration—is ever offered to them. Amongst the

victims of this objectionable practice are some of the ablest vocalists and instrumentalists of the day. I know one, in particular, who has sung this year at more than fifty concerts *for nothing*, and has actually on more than one occasion sacrificed well-paid lessons in order to give his support to "fellow-artists," whose own personal capacities for entertaining a room-full of music-lovers by no means justify them in opening their mouths or assaulting a keyboard in public. It was my duty, a few weeks ago, to attend more than one of these lugubrious concerts, exclusively dependent upon erring benevolence for such isolated attractions as they could boast of; and I brought away from them the conviction that London is the only European capital in which musical performances of so worthless a character could possibly be proffered to the public with the faintest hope of paying their expenses, insignificant as are these latter.

On the whole, looking back dispassionately to the musical achievements of the past season, I cannot conscientiously say that it was productive of much benefit to *entrepreneurs*, artists, or audiences—to the working members of the musical profession or to the hosts of cultivated *dilettanti* gathered together in this huge city. It has put forth few novelties; scarcely any of extraordinary value, either in the way of compositions or of executants. Its prevailing feature was the dulness that is the offspring of mediocrity. But for Alice Barbi and Isidore de Lara, the majority of its concerts would have been intolerably tiresome. In the way of pianism, its most interesting episodes were due to Leonhard Bach and Benjamin Cesi. As usual, it introduced to us no English pianist of any moment; nor, indeed, with the exception of Messrs. Deane Brand and Coffin, any native-born vocalist worthy of especial mention. It was, in short, a disappointing, unsatisfactory musical season; and as such I take my leave of it, hoping for better things next year.

I have great pleasure in calling attention to the most sensible, instructive and compendious treatise upon "Piano-Playing and Teaching" that has hitherto, to my knowledge, been published in this or any other language. It is written by Signora M. L. Grimaldi, published by Reeves, 185, Fleet Street, and only costs a shilling. Every one who intends to have his or her children taught the piano should read and take it to heart. So should every student of the most strangely abused of musical instruments. So should nineteen of every twenty pianoforte teachers who profess to instruct the youth of these islands in an accomplishment which, as it is at present taught, is so much more frequently a curse than a blessing to everybody concerned in it. For it is a gloomy fact, well known to every true English musician, that the land of the brave and the free teems with inferior pianists, many hundreds of whom might have achieved executant excellence

had they not been persistently misdirected by stupid or vicious methods of instruction. Hear what Signora Grimaldi says on this point:—"The love of music has become so deeply rooted in England as to render it remarkable that a higher standard of excellence in piano playing has not been reached by the amateurs of that art in a country which is now the centre of attraction for all the best musical talent in the world. The cause of this strange shortcoming in an essentially musical people is, I am firmly persuaded, defective elementary instruction. . . . Good teachers of music for children are rare. The governess, who generally knows very little herself, begins the child's musical education; the "finishing master" comes afterwards, and as a rule finds nothing to finish, and everything to begin. . . . After three or four years of grinding at exercises and scales in a slumberous way, of daily tunes with the same faults in the same places, and of showers of false notes, the professor makes his appearance. With him come the runs up and down the keyboard at least twenty times without stopping, and Cramer's or Czerny's Studies. This for the technic. For the rest, the latest "fantasia" has the preference, or "something of his own composition." Liszt's transcriptions will give the "finishing" touch, or—to show his classic tendencies—the "Moonlight Sonata" and Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words." Arrived at this goal, the pupil knows about as much as when he first began to learn. He has no definite kind of touch; in a word, no touch at all; he only *touches* the keys in a stiff or limp way, according to the P. or F. marks. He has no comprehension of signs; *staccato* and *legato* are meaningless to him, as are such words as 'phrasing' and 'punctuation.' He keeps down the *forte* pedal nearly all the time he is playing, in order to make what he plays more effective from his own point of view, and also to drown the false notes. The torture he inflicts upon his musical hearers is incomparable."

It would be impossible to describe more accurately the wretched results of the method of teaching actually applied to the large majority of music-studying children belonging to the upper and middle-classes of English society. Signora Grimaldi is equally graphic and accurate on the subject of the instruction in playing afforded by the "all-round" governess in private families. "Her pupil eventually comes out of the school room dreading the piano as a domestic enemy. After the daily drudgery of scales, exercises, and *pièces de salon* come the drawing-room performances, for the delight of papa and the anguish of visitors. She plays nearly all the 'Songs without Words,' one or two of Schubert's Impromptus, and a few Andantes of Beethoven. Her playing is invariably lukewarm and mild, and absolutely powerless and colourless. To play otherwise would be considered too demonstrative and in *quasi* bad form. The very name of Bach makes her shudder; fugues are beyond her reach and comprehension; besides, 'mamma does not like them.' Schumann is considered

obscure and unsatisfactory; of Chopin she knows one or two waltzes. The additional expensive lessons of the 'finishing master' add a few pieces to her *répertoire*, but little to her knowledge." The ministrations of this functionary are very happily hit off. "More anxious to get on himself, and to keep his social reputation as a good teacher, than to make an artist of his pupil, he plunges at once into his own system —an old method of exercises fingered by a modern composer; the driest work of Mozart or Schumann, at which he himself ground in years gone by; or 'the classics edited by himself.' If he happens to play at all, he is very careful not to do so for his pupil, and is as impenetrable as a sphynx in all that concerns what he regards as the secrets of his art. The hour of the lesson goes comfortably by, and during the softer passages he sometimes indulges in a nap. . . . Teachers who prescribe hosts of exercises have generally little else to teach. Pedants in art, they treat music as a medicine, to be taken in small, very disagreeable doses; a labour for the fingers only, with the result of a hard, dry, unsympathetic touch and performance. Indifferent pianists, they screen themselves behind the pile of exercises which they call 'technic,' and which constitutes all their artistic knowledge of music. They apply the same method to the school-girl who has still to 'make her fingers,' and to the grown-up man, whose technical education has been neglected, but whose musical feeling and taste may be as perfect as those of a born artist."

Every word of Signora Grimaldi's pamphlet is worth reading. So sound, true, and sagacious are the *aperçus* with which its forty pages abound that the temptation to quote at a greater length than would be fair to the author is almost irresistible to one who, like myself, earnestly desires to see English pianism lifted out of the servile and narrow groove in which it has been running for many years past. There is, however, so much force and pregnancy in what she writes about the class of pianoforte music imposed upon young people in this country by teachers, parents, and—alas! that I should be obliged to admit it—society at large, that I cannot forbear reproducing a few more of her trenchant remarks in this place, sincerely hoping and believing that they will be taken to heart by the readers of The Theatre. "Amongst the evils of bad teaching must be mentioned the quantity of bad music given to pupils. In no other country is so much rubbish printed as in England. It is most injurious—often irreparably so—to the taste of the student, unwholesome, and entirely devoid of that refining influence which is the key-note of all healthy music. There ought to be a society to suppress the printing of bad music, the issue of which increases every day. The publisher fattens on it; schools and quiet homesteads throughout the land are inundated with it. Every girl possesses half-a-dozen 'arrangements' from the Italian operas, a distorted air from 'Lohengrin,' with flowing variations; the March from 'Tannhäuser,' arranged for small hands,

&c. Those who encourage or spread this kind of rubbish deserve to play it, and listen to it for ever. Dante, had he foreseen it, might have kept a circle for them in his 'Inferno.' The immense harm done to the taste of the people by these compounds of vulgarity can hardly be realised. How many times are we not asked by society folk, after a fugue of Bach, or even a sonata of Beethoven, has been played, 'Now, do play us something nice!' If the solicitant be a girl, she will ask for 'something soft and sentimental,' as only the middle-aged have a weakness for lively tunes. And yet all these have at one period of their lives been taught *music*. Akin to this bad music is that which has been arranged, or rather disarranged, for the use of beginners. That is lamed, mutilated, deformed. How can any one dare to touch works of art, and, with utter disregard for the beauty of unity, break their perfect structure, and ignore the living poem they represent? With an intolerable want of respect for the genius that gave these art-works life, they pull off their limbs and leave only the carcase, which (by the name of 'Classics for the Young') they throw under the clumsy fingers of children. . . . If the time employed on a dislocated reminiscence of a Polonaise by Chopin, or of a Kinderscene by Schumann, were devoted to a little fugue by Haendel, or a small prelude by Bach, the pupil would get to the 'classics' sooner, and by the only true road. It is of no use to make the 'classics' a penny toy to play with. The player's style will be perverted by those dismembered recollections; the ear will be haunted in years to come by a distorted remembrance of what the pupil may then try to play in earnest; the effect on his brain will be like the shimmering thread of false silver made by the track of a snail." Thus the Signora Grimaldi, in the prolegomena to her admirable treatise, which, in its subsequent chapters, contains advice as to methods of leaning how to play the piano as it should be played, which cannot be too attentively perused by teachers honestly desirous to fulfil their duties in the best possible manner, as well as by pupils animated by a wholesome ambition to attain real proficiency in the art they love and reverence. Counsel at once so wise and so intelligible is indeed a precious boon to earnest students, young and old alike.

Amongst the new musical publications that have reached me in the course of the past month are several score which I propose to leave unmentioned, having nothing agreeable to say about them; and two —both brought out by Mr. Williams, of Berners Street—the simplicity and manifest spontaneity of which entitle them to a few words of kindly notice. One of these compositions is an unpretentious little song called "So the Story Runs," the words of which, by Mr. Adair Fitzgerald, are a pleasant paraphrase of the familiar nursery-rhyme, "Jack and Jill went up a hill," whilst the melody, by Mr. Lionel Elliott, is refreshingly plain-sailing and cheerful. The other is a march composed by Mr. John Farmer, and well suited to a military band, being strongly phrased, melodious, and spirited. I have often

wondered why it is that English composers of marches seldom or ever dedicate works of this class to any of Her Majesty's regiments. In Germany and Austria it is by no means uncommon that a cavalry or infantry regiment should have a march of its own—frequently written for it by its bandmaster—to which it tramps along proudly on parade and review days when coming on or going off the inspection-ground. What is the use of writing a really good march in this country? Such a composition is rarely performed by a concert-room orchestra or military band; and people in society scarcely ever play marches on the piano when requested to stimulate conversation by "a little music." Why should not every regiment of the British army be fitted out with a march specially affected, like its facings, to its own use and distinction? Perhaps there is some peremptory regulation that stands in the way of such an innovation; if not, the suggestion is a practical one, and I gladly make a present of it to my composing fellow-countrymen.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

Our Play-Box.

"HOODMAN BLIND."

A New and Original Play, in Four Acts and Fourteen Scenes, by Henry A. Jones and Wilson Barrett. Produced at the Princess's Theatre on Tuesday, August 18, 1885.

Jack Yeulett	Mr. Wilson Barrett	Attendant	Mr. Field
Nance Yeulett	Miss Eastlake	Johnny Twite	Mr. Mark Ambient
Kit	Miss Phœbe Carlo	Mad Willy	Mr. S. Carson
Mark Lezzard	Mr. E. S. Willard	Ferdinand Fitzraleigh	Mr. H. Cooper Cliffe
Kridge	Mr. Clifford Cooper	The Old Soldier	Mr. Warren
Mr. Lendon	Mr. C. Fulton	Policeman	Mr. Aubrey
Ben Chibbles	Mr. George Barrett	Bob Swirrup	Master McIntyre
Jim Dadge	Mr. H. Evans	Nipper Jelks	Master Morter
Noah Quodling	Mr. George Walton	Tomtit	Miss Maudie Clitherow
Tom Lattiker	Mr. Charles Hudson	Jess	Miss Eastlake
Joe Swirrup	Mr. H. Bernage	Polly Chibbles	Miss L. Garth
Ephraim Beevor	Mr. W. A. Elliott	Granny Quodling	Mrs. Huntley
Jelks	Mr. C. Gurth	Mrs. Beevor	Miss Alice Cooke
Abe Chawner	Mr. de Solla	Mrs. Chawner	Mrs. Beckett
Inspector Jermin	Mr. E. Price	Liz	Miss A. Belmore
Footman	Mr. Barrington	Kitty	Miss Eva Wilson

The village of Abbots Creslow is asleep. The sun has set on the sylvan Buckinghamshire lanes. The gossips and chatterboxes, the talkative butcher, and the loquacious blacksmith, the women who make scandal at the well, and the men who make mischief at the farm, have all got them to their rest. Not a soul is stirring in this quiet corner of Old England; surely innocence and peace have their habitation here and reign supreme. No; there is a light in one of the upper windows at Abbots Creslow. Let us go upstairs and look inside the mysterious room. A strange scene, indeed. A man is dying on a low couch, and two nervous, anxious men are watching him. They wait eagerly for the last breath to pass out of his body. He revives, he calls for pen and paper, he wants to make his will. There is not a moment to be lost, and the last testament is hurriedly drawn by the pale-faced, grey-haired man, Mark Lezzard, and witnessed by his only partner and companion, Kridge, of Abbots Creslow. Watch this Mark Lezzard carefully, how nervous and anxious, and yet how he struggles to be calm and self-composed. He is a man of the world, he has seen care, he has encountered some desperate sorrow,

for his young face is lined with grief. Surely he is a man who has loved deeply and been disappointed or deceived? A bad, cruel man is Mark Lezzard. He has been the almoner of sums that he has squandered, he has appropriated money that he has not accounted for, he has been the agent of an old friend in Canada, who lies dying in his presence, and the money that should have supported his old friend's girls has found its way into his pocket. Unless this man dies, and dies quickly, Mark Lezzard's crime will be known; he is so eager to burn all traces of the dying man's identity that already he begins rummaging among his papers. The dying man suddenly recovers consciousness, and advances towards the traitors who are fingering his gold. A short struggle, a painful gasp, and all is over. The friend from Canada is dead. A gleam of satisfaction steals over the features of the pale-faced man. His secret is only known to his scoundrelly partner Kridge. Dead men tell no tales. The pretty young wife of Mark's intimate friend, Jack Yeulett, of Abbots Creslow, will never know that she has been defrauded out of her father's property. Jack will never dream that he has nursed a serpent on his hearth, and given his hand in confidence to a false friend. Yes, false, doubly false, trebly false, unutterably base and cruel. Nance Yeulett, the wife of Mark's friend, the daughter of the dead man in the room, the prettiest little woman in Abbots Creslow, what memories does not that name recall? Mark Lezzard has loved her all his life, wildly, passionately, with the slow, smouldering fire that is daily and hourly consuming him. Once, years ago, as a child, she had given Mark Lezzard an innocent kiss. The memory of that one kiss has never been effaced from his memory; it makes the man tremble and grow pale when he thinks of it. For what has happened? The girl never cared for Mark save as a brother or a friend. She has laughed away his love. She has given her hand and heart, her pure soul and stainless body to the keeping of a handsome, dashing young farmer, a good fellow and a reformed rake, Jack Yeulett, of Abbots Creslow Farm. So you see clearly the situation. The friend from Canada is lying dead in Mark Lezzard's room, robbed, strangled and deceived. Kridge and Lezzard together have appropriated his property. He is to be given out to the gossips of the village as a distant cousin suddenly deceased. The morning light is breaking over Abbots Creslow. The birds are beginning to sing in the country hedges. The sun is breaking away from the blue clouds of summer darkness. I wonder if strange dreams disturbed the rest of Jack Yeulett and his fair young wife? I wonder if either of them moaned or murmured in their sleep? I wonder if any dark shadow passed across their placid faces during that mysterious midnight when the old man from Canada breathed his last and sorrow crept closer and closer to their happy home?

We breathe again. It is morning now. Darkness is over, and the bells are ringing over happy Abbots Creslow. There is to be a wedding. The blacksmith has found a bride, and the happy folk come trooping in after the fashion of the celebrated picture of Fildes. Who so happy to welcome them as the Yeuletts, for marriage has been to them their sweetest portion? Marriage and a good wife have been the making of Jack Yeulett. He has left the alehouse and bad companions. He has turned

over a new leaf. He has become a patient husbandman, for has not God blessed him with a little son, the spoiled darling of the little household. See, he comes from the fields, the honest fellow, bronzed with the sun, happy with toil; his little boy is riding "pick a back," the lads and lasses cheer him as he comes to the threshold of his door. Of course, Jack Yeulett must kiss the bride, and the bride does not seem indifferent to a kiss from Jack Yeulett. Nance is not jealous; not she; she loves her husband too well. She pretends to hide her eyes, but enjoys the fun as well as anybody. So happy is the scene, and so bright the day, that even Jack Yeulett and his wife forget the little sorrow that has stolen upon them. They have got into debt. The farm of Jack's ancestors is threatened, and Kridge, the land agent, comes to bully him for the arrears of rent. A passionate appeal from Jack not to steal from him this "old roof tree," a stirring, heartfelt request for time, for mercy, for common charity, falls dead upon the ears of the hard-fisted scoundrel Kridge, and in the background the evil-hearted Mark allows his heart to be devoured by jealousy as Jack Yeulett takes his boy into his arms, and, with his wife hanging about his neck, enters the dear home that is threatened, to eat their quiet meal in comfort, and to pray that the threatened disaster may yet be averted. Down comes the curtain. A charming act, everyone is satisfied. How daintily, and with what grace of truth and expression, have the authors handled their subject. Mr. Wilson Barrett is an ideal yeoman. Miss Eastlake has shaken off her fidgetty nervousness that hampered her years ago, and is still steadily improving and winning more favour. Everything is right—not too much rhetoric and no excess of comedy. And already the attention of the audience is firmly fixed on Mr. E. S. Willard as Lezzard. How finely he has opened the play, how thoroughly self-contained he is. What a make-up! We understand the man and know him as well as if we had met him in the flesh at a real Abbots Creslow.

Mark Lezzard has not to wait long for his revenge. Suddenly there come tramping through Abbots Creslow a handsome young gipsy fellow, Tom Lattiker, with his paramour, Jess. The girl idolises the man, she is never so happy as when his arms are about her neck. Strange to say, this wandering waif, this scrap of female "flotsam and jetsam," this wild, impulsive creature, who "loves to be loved," bears an extraordinary re-resemblance to Nance Yeulett. But why should it be strange, since in very truth the girls are half-sisters? The likeness of wandering Jess to pretty Nance creates an instant scandal. The villagers report that Nance has been seen with a handsome gipsy's arm about her neck, and the tongues of all the scandalmongers are set wagging. Jack Yeulett himself is suddenly confronted with the scandal in a village alehouse, and is prepared to defend his wife's honour with his fists. Meanwhile, by a strange coincidence, Mark Lezzard has seen the gipsy's light o' love, and has been thunderstruck by the coincidence. He is in a rare mood for devilry. He has forgotten himself so far as to make love to his friend's wife. Tortured by the agony that has been consuming him, he has reminded Nance of that first kiss that has worked his ruin, and has spoken love words to his friend's wife. Needless to say the good woman has repelled his advances with scorn, and reminded him of the foul trick he

is playing on his friend. Mark, abashed and humiliated, retires from the good woman's presence more devilish than before.

Let me pause here—I cannot refrain from doing so—to praise once more unreservedly the acting of Mr. Willard in this short scene. I have only seen this play once, but the impression made upon me by Mr. Willard's acting at this point dwells vividly on my memory. It is the last appeal of a desperate man. The wild eye, the anxious-lined countenance, the husky voice denote the supreme agitation of the man. The actor has steeped himself in the idea. He is the man that he is presenting himself to be. His eyes seem burning with coals of fire, his lips are parched, his whole frame is agitated. Never was sensuality presented with better art or with less offence. It is natural, it is true, it is human. It is a heresy to say so in this canting, Pharisaical age, when we are to be converted by the braying trumpets of the Salvation Army, and to be taught our duty by misguided editors, who hawk their vile obscenity in the name of religion, and when Cardinals and Archbishops are seen strutting in the cowards' camp of the Puritans—sham, bad, vulgar, cruel Puritans. It will not be popular to confess in these days of social outrage, when hypocrisy is rampant and the essence of Christianity is forgotten, that I can sympathise with a bad man, but I for one can sympathise with Mark Lezzard at this point. He for one had been bitterly tried and sorely punished. The love of this one woman might have done so much for him. Remember this, you howling Salvationists who think you have a specific of virtue! This man, Mark Lezzard, might have been converted by Nance had she loved him as he loved another. She converted Jack, the reprobate, the drunkard, the social outcast. Might she not have converted Mark also? I will not throw one stone against him now, when, conquered by love, he forgets his honour. Have these dreadfully virtuous people, who can never understand temptation, ever read "The Triumph of Time"? It is written by Swinburne, so I suppose they will shake their virtuous skirts in my face, and send a Salvation Army Life Guard to take me into custody for quoting him. But I will. I can hear Mark Lezzard murmuring these verses when he blunders out the outpourings of his diseased heart.

> You have chosen and clung to the life they sent you,
> Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer,
> But will it not one day in heaven repent you,
> Will they solace you wholly, the days that were?
> Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,
> Meet mine and see where the great love is,
> And tremble and turn and be changed? Content you
> The gate is strait: I shall not be there,
>
> But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,
> Had you seen good such a thing were done,
> I, too, might have stood with the souls that stand
> In the sunlight, clothed with the light of the sun.
> But who now on earth need care how I live?
> Have the high gods anything left to give,
> Save dust and laurels and gold and sand,
> Which gifts are goodly, but I will none!

It is the fault of Mr. Willard; it is due to his fine idea of showing a wicked man who might have been a better one if his love-sowing had prospered, that I am reminded of the hero of the "Triumph of Time" in this connection. Your Pharisee, who brays about his password to Kingdom Come, and will never have an atom of pity for the tempted, cannot understand there can be a grain of pity for Mark Lezzard at this point. I can. Does he not say in his eyes, in his look, in his bearing, when he proffers his disgraceful love,

> But if we had loved each other, O, sweet!
> Had you felt lying under the palms of your feet
> The heart of my heart beating harder with pleasure,
> To feel you tread it to dust and death!

Mark Lezzard leaves Nance a greater devil than before. The iron has entered into his soul. Suddenly, seing the gipsy girl who resembles her so, he is tempted to bribe the girl and her lover. What does he want them to do? Merely to make love by moonlight in a leafy spinny. There is nothing Jess loves more. So when Jess and the gipsy are conveniently embracing on a stile, Mark brings Jack to the spot. The girl flies away frightened, and the muscular farmer, not content with his fists, is coward enough to threaten his antagonist with a knife. How manners and customs have changed! A quarter of a century ago if an English farmer had threatened to "knife" his enemy he would have been hissed off the stage. Then comes one of the great scenes of the play. Othello, burning with jealousy, has an interview with innocent Desdemona, and the coward but maddened yeoman flings his wife on the floor.

The acting of Mr. Wilson Barrett here is at its best. It is fervent, passionate, eloquent, and natural. He thoroughly arouses the sympathies of his audience, and the somewhat doubtful "dodge" of the spinny scene is forgotten before a true instant of genuine and strong drama. Both Mr. Barrett and Miss Eastlake deserve great credit for the rendering of an old-fashioned but ever-interesting scene.

Nance and Jack separate and go on their separate ways of life. Nance makes pillow-lace in a garret to keep body and soul together. Jack goes to the Adelphi Arches and buys crutches for a poor little wretch who lives on straw in a dog kennel. The lame child recognises Jack's photograph of his wife as somebody he has once seen, and later on Jack, who is about to commit suicide, thinks better of it, and rescues Jess, who has been deserted by her gipsy, and with her dying breath confesses the deceit she has practised on the innocent and misguided husband. I believe the third act has been considerably altered since the first night, and I am glad of it. Reconsideration was imperatively necessary. The "character" has been curtailed. A drunken swell and a monstrous soldier do not disfigure the Thames Embankment scene with their irritating presence. But there is one scene that I trust has not been suppressed in obedience to the howls of the Pharisees. I mean the scene where Jess, abandoned by her lover, and insulted by his attentions to another woman, tries to fascinate him with her piping song and feeble

dance. Miss Eastlake was not at the outset quite bold enough to attack this scene properly. She handles it nervously, but it is a wonderfully fine dramatic moment, and if she only dared do what the situation suggests she would be well rewarded. One moment of inspired acting is required here. But that is asking a great deal, is it not ?

Jess having confessed who was the villain, there is nothing for Jack to do but to go down to Abbots Creslow and confront Mark. The play ends on as rank an exhibition of cowardice as I have ever seen applauded on the English stage. I know that we live in curious times, when we are told that for the sinner there is absolutely no mercy, and when, if the Puritans could have the punishing of them they would boil them in oil, and tear out their finger nails. I am aware that these are the days when popular actors who "sympathise" with hypocrites and advocates for the dissemination of unworthy literature are asked to preach on park platforms in order to convert us all to the Salvation Army. But for all that I cannot regard Jack, the modern farmer, in the light of a hero, when he drags his wretched victim into the market-place, and throws him like a carcase of meat into the fangs of the bloodhounds he has aroused to tear him to pieces. Is it the new code of Christianity to be merciless to your enemies, and have we wilfully reversed the old order of things when we were taught it was the highest thing to "pray for those who despitefully use you"? It offends me to the quick to see the representative of British virtue posing and attitudinising on a village platform when he has flung his enemy into the hands of infuriated men all armed to the teeth. I hold that Jack Yeulett, who has before tried to "knife" his rival, is here represented as a rank coward and dastard. I don't care what the villain has done to him. He has committed no sin worthy of the brutal exercise of Lynch Law. If the farmer had the pluck of a mouse he would exercise his own vengeance himself. He would either slay his enemy or let him go. He would not waste his strength on a cruel tirade, and then give an unarmed man to butchers, blacksmiths, and brutes. I have said elsewhere, and I repeat it again, that I sympathise with the villain at this point. I sympathise with him because Salvation Army justice is meted out to him. He is allowed no quarter. The muscular farmer has not the English pluck to thrash or the noble Christian charity to save him. He flings him to butchers with their knives, to blacksmiths with their hammers, and to brutes with their sticks. But what does it matter! He is a sinner, and he is past salvation. The Founder of Christianity could forgive His enemies, not the modern hypocritical farmer. Jack, the yeoman, has been a sinner before now. I doubt not that in his conscience there are passages as dark as were ever travelled by this wretched Mark. But he cries from his pinnacle in the market-place, "I am not as other men are." He does not beat his breast like that other publican, and cry, "Be merciful to me a sinner." He remembers not his own transgressions, but grins defiantly when his helpless foe is being torn to bits before his very eyes. Fancy this dastard posing as the representative of British pluck. Knifing a man one minute, and chuckling when he is lynched the next. Has he ever read Browning? This was the stanza that came up to my mind when I

saw cowardice triumphant, and the flaunting Pharisee greeted with a round of Salvation Army cheers :—

And I—what I seem to my friend you see
What I soon shall seem to his love, you guess.
What I seem to myself do you ask of me ?
No hero I confess !

This is a curious example of criticism, you will say ; this is an eccentric mixing up of fiction and fact, this is an unusual way of applying a stage play to the existing cant and hypocrisy that eat out the very vitals of society and threaten our liberties ! It may be so, but then again these are strange times, and, unless we are on the alert, our audiences will forget to applaud what is noble, and true, and generous in life, and will continue to uphold the knifing and lynching of sinners. I sympathise with the sinner of this play far more than with the hero. And why ? Because the one is at least penitent and repentant, and because the other is merciless and unforgiving. I think of Mark Lezzard with pity, because I see him, with his poor white face, imploring for mercy from his stronger rival, who, instead of giving it, calls up a pack of wolves, casts a battered carcase into their yelling midst, and in the *mêlée* strikes an attitude as a Christian martyr ! "Go and sin no more" is a canon of Christianity that exists no more. It has been drowned in the din of howling Salvationists, and in the bellowings of people who sympathise with dirty and detestable demonstrations. It was lost when men had the impudence to pretend that a mighty capital could be sinless, and when women drove to Hyde Park to preach about filth. Let us save the stage whilst we can from this blasphemous hypocrisy. In our efforts to Christianise the masses we are forgetting that charity was once considered the sweetest and the best of Christian virtues. It is so no longer. Is there a sinner in your midst ? Yes. Then pound him into a jelly and send his wretched soul to perdition ! Let him not be saved because he was unclean ; let him be cast into eternity, like offal, because he was once impure. His sins were once scarlet : they shall never be as white as snow. No hyssop shall purge him, no water shall wash him clean ; his broken bones shall never rejoice, for was he not a sinner for whom there is no salvation ?

C. S.

This is not the way with actors of the older school. Their first duty is to make themselves felt. They assert themselves. Before they appear you seem to know that someone is coming. Think for a moment how countenances relax from severity into smiles when an actor like John S. Clarke appears. How, without speaking a word, an artist like Henry Neville with a bold front and a fine presence directs immoderate attention to himself at the very outset, or how William Farren and countless others do not waste time in pulling the attention of the audience together, but get it at once. Half the plays that fail nowadays fail because the spirit and heart of comedy are wanting. A hearty laugh, a comical expression, a determination to act and not to drone go half-way to the making of a play. This neglected, the audience goes to sleep. Why is it that plays at the Criterion always go so well? Because the spirit of comedy is infectious, and Charles Wyndham overflows with it.

John S. Clarke is a student as well as an actor. He has seen the great ones of the past, and profited by the impression made on him. He loves his books, and has a rich store of theatrical anecdotes. It is at some such time as this, when the comedian shakes off his laughing cap, plunges into tragedy with instant force, and gives us a bit of Forrest or Macready, that we wonder why he has never tried a strong serio-comic character. He has such nervous strength and power, his force is so sudden and electric, that I can see him in some new Daddy Hardacre, some modern Sampson Burr. Who knows when it will come? Meanwhile he is excellent and widely popular as he is.

Miss Florence West, whose portrait is presented to the readers of The Theatre this month, sends me her interesting autobiography. It will be read with advantage by all aspirants to a career on the stage, and will be found to be an example of strong and determined perseverance, ending in credit to herself and promise for the future:—"At the outset I had never had any idea of going on to the stage, although I dearly loved acting, having appeared some half-a-dozen times in leading parts as an amateur for charities. I remember on the last occasion playing for the Chelsea Hospital to over 900 friends at the Kensington Town Hall. 'The Queen's Shilling' was the comedy we played, written up and altered from the published play, 'The Lancers,' so as to resemble the piece as it was put on at the St. James's as nearly as possible. Innocent as I was, I knew nothing about the laws of copyright, and didn't discover until long afterwards that I was transgressing in thus appropriating the title of 'The Queen's Shilling,' its personages, and situations. I only knew at the time that I had so admired Mrs. Kendal in the part of Kate Greville that I was wild to play it, as it had been so cleverly arranged for her. Soon after this performance of mine, I was pressingly anxious to find some immediate occupation, which would distract my thoughts, and give me what I sorely needed—forgetfulness of present care. In this mood I acted on the impulse of the moment, and wrote to one whom I had often heard praised as one of the kindest and best-hearted of men—Mr. John Law-

"You will kill me, I know it!"
CALLED BACK.

Florence West

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,
263, OXFORD STREET, W.

rance Toole. He was a stranger to me, as, indeed, were all actors and actresses. I knew nobody connected with the profession. Mr. Toole answered my letter himself, and said he hoped I was not one of those foolish young ladies who wanted impulsively to dash on to the stage. I replied to this that I had no wild ideas about making my first appearance as one of the Shakespearean heroines; in fact, I did not desire to do anything for which through inexperience I was at present unfitted. I wrote that I did desire ardently to go on the stage, and I thought I could act when I got there; at present I suggested that a part with some comedy, pathos, and a touch of power would suit me best.

I suppose Mr. Toole liked my letter, for he wrote telling me to call at his theatre. On the morning of the day I was to be in King William Street, I had a letter from one best able to guide me, and who is very dear to me, strongly urging me to alter my determination. After reading this appeal to me, I made up my mind to respect so pressing an injunction, and to go to Mr. Toole and tell him why I had changed my mind. I felt I must keep my appointment at the theatre, for I had such a great desire to meet and speak to an actor as renowned as Mr. Toole. However, I was disappointed that day, for Mr. Loveday received me. He was very kind, and said he was sorry I had availed myself of a woman's prerogative, as he was favourably impressed with me, and was prepared to rehearse me, and then, if I pleased the management, offer me the part of Mary Belton in the forthcoming revival of 'Uncle Dick's Darling.' Here was a temptation! I felt I could play that part. I could just remember the first theatre my father ever took me to—the Gaiety. They played 'Uncle Dick's Darling' that night, with Miss Neilson as Mary Belton, Mr. Irving as Chevenix, Mr. Toole as Uncle Dick, Mr. Clayton as Jo, the honest blacksmith, and Miss Litton (so I'm told; of course, I don't remember this) as one of the schoolgirls in the first scene. Well, the end of my interview with Mr. Loveday was that my resolves vanished into thin air, and I went home with the old prompt copy of the play tucked tenderly away in my arms. I was told to glance at the part, and then I should rehearse it at the theatre. A short time elapsed, and then Mr. Loveday wrote fixing a rehearsal for a certain morning. I need scarcely say that the interval between the receipt of this note and the confiding to me of the play was spent in careful study of the part: I think there was never an hour in the day that I didn't hold that book in my hand. I took possession of a large empty room at the top of our house, and there I rehearsed to myself—the necessary fall as well. This last I had never attempted, and many were the bruises I inflicted on myself in consequence.

The day which was to decide my future arrived, and I left for Toole's Theatre. I remember how exercised I was in my mind regarding the appropriate costume to wear at a real, proper rehearsal, and how at length I decided in favour of a long black one. What a miserable, cold-blooded ordeal a rehearsal of this sort is! How sick and nervous I felt! But I plucked up courage, and dashed at the speeches; and when I came to the scene in the forge, to the appeal

of the wretched, heart-broken outcast for mercy, I forgot everything except that I was a miserable, dying woman asking for pardon, and ——. Mr. Billington said: 'Very nice; very nice, indeed!' And so I was engaged to play at a real theatre, and was to receive a comfortable little salary. I felt that I had wilfully neglected good and unselfish counsel; still some of my relations and heaps of my friends came forward and booked their seats manfully for my coming *début*, which was fixed for February 26, 1883. The day arrived—shall I ever forget it?—and as the time drew near for me first to go to the theatre and dress, and then to run on to the stage, I was shaking so that I could scarcely walk; I remember Mr. Toole at the wings trying to reassure me, and he was almost as nervous as I was. I had enjoined my people not to applaud me, and on no account to give me any flowers. I was glad that they obeyed me, for I wanted to depend on the public, and the public only, for any reward I was to receive that night. I did my best, I know. I put all my heart and soul into everything I did, and my audience encouraged me.

On the next day when I read the criticisms, and all that week, I felt—well, I will not say what I felt about every critic who wrote such kind things about me, and to think that I didn't even know the name of one of them. After the run of 'Uncle Dick's Darling,' I played at some *matinées*, and was cast for a new play, which was suddenly put on one side for the burlesque, 'Stage Dora.' Of course there was no part in this for me, and so my engagement terminated. And what a happy one it had been! Everybody connected with the theatre had shown me kindness, and I shall ever feel grateful to Mr. Toole for his goodness to me. Mr. Loveday even was so kind as to mention my name favourably to Mr. David James, with whom I arranged to tour in 'Our Boys,' playing Mary Melrose. On my return to town, came numberless *matinées*, amongst them, 'On Guard,' 'Road to Ruin,' 'Cinq Mars,' 'She Stoops to Conquer,' 'London Assurance,' 'Led Astray,' 'Henry Dunbar,' &c., &c. I was then offered Pauline in 'Called Back' (Mr. Comyns Carr's version, of course), which I played for some months in the provinces, concluding with three weeks at the Standard Theatre with a specially selected company, including Mr. Arthur Dacre.

After I played Pauline, the best juvenile leading woman's part that has been written for years, I had a *matinée* last winter when I produced two modest little plays; the afternoon's entertainment was an unqualified success, mainly due to the efforts of my kind fellow-actors and actresses who appeared for me. There were Miss Kate Vaughan, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Fred Leslie, Mr. Astley, Mr. Harry Paulton, Mr. Arthur Roberts, and Mrs. Billington. Very soon after this *matinée* I was engaged for leading juvenile parts with Madame Modjeska. I had a most charming tour with one of the kindest women I have ever met. I played Celia in 'As You Like It,' Nichette in 'Heartsease,' and the Duchesse d'Aumont in 'Adrienne Lecouvreur;' this last play was put on at the Lyceum Theatre for a week before we commenced the tour. From the Prince's Theatre to-day came an offer to play the leading part in 'In his Power,' which Mr. Edgar Bruce is sending

on tour in September, and there are other good things in store. So I must work on, and be thankful for the good luck that has hitherto attended me."

Mr. John Coleman sends the following letter:—In your last number, my old friend genial Joe Hatton states that "both Victor Hugo and Charles Reade were alike in their dislike of dogs!"

Permit me to put the gentle Joseph (whom I first introduced to the great Charles) right on this subject.

My acquaintance with the illustrious Frenchman was so slight that I cannot venture to speak of his proclivities in this respect, but I can speak of the equally illustrious Englishman.

No man liked dogs better than Charles Reade. When I first knew him, the pet of the household was an obese white Pomeranian known as "Superior Tiny." When this superior creature took his departure full of years and honours, and his loss had been deplored for a considerable period, the great novelist went down to the Dogs' Home at Battersea—upon an occasion made memorable by a famous article in the *Daily Telegraph*—and bought five dogs, chiefly mongrel, for he always maintained that the mixed breed was the most intelligent of the canine species. Three of his purchases he presented to friends, but "Puff," a mongrel poodle, and "Tiny Number Two," a mongrel Isle of Skye, were to the day of their master's death "monarchs of all they surveyed" at Shepherd's Bush.

"Puff" was lost twice, and upon one occasion his master paid a reward of £15 for his return.

Some years ago, when Reade was visiting with us, "an interesting event" occurred to our little brown terrier, who was an especial favourite with Leo (so we called the leonine one).

During this visit he was taken ill and was confined to his room for some days. It was summer time, and every morning at five o'clock, before the household was astir, Miss Bebba used to carry the only two remaining members of her family to the door of his chamber and scratch until she was let in.

Then she would take the pups in her mouth and deposit them on the bed, one on either side of Reade. This done, she would spring up and coil herself around his neck.

Many a time have I seen them sleeping thus together; many a time have I heard him say that the affection of this poor little dog was quite a consolation to him during the progress of a most distressing malady."

A friend writes:—"The original parents of that much-abused person the modern dramatic amateur are, undoubtedly, the nomad band of notabilities that term themselves 'Old Stagers,' and who for nearly half a century have played during the pretty cricket carnival of South England—'the Canterbury week,' In the early days the amateur

won praise and fame by the mere fact of his appearance on the stage, his more or less accurate remembrance of a certain percentage of his lines, and the certainty that he wore well-fitting clothes, and 'behaved as such.' Now-a-days the amateur plunges into melodrama, and is worthy of all praise for this effort, in the reach after realism and strength. A vigorous 'crib-cracker' is a stronger study to tackle than the usual run of obviously genteel parts. I recommend to all amateurs the bold example of the 'Old Stagers,' who played the 'Ticket-of-Leave Man.' Taking it as a whole, it was a sensible, clever, and earnest performance. Omitting the fanciful names adopted by the players (whose pseudonyms are but thin veils of celebrity), we record our appreciation of the Bob Brierley, the Melter Moss, and the Hawkshaw. It is full twenty years since Tom Taylor produced and played in his own play at Canterbury, with Kate Terry, Ellen Terry, and Lydia Foote, in the drama and epilogue, and the traditional business has been faithfully preserved as handed down by that excellent 'Old Stager.' 'The Lesson in Love' and 'Betsy Baker' were given on alternate nights, but the real interest centred in the vigorous and valiant attack of the old Olympic play, that is written with such decision and breadth, and that was, undoubtedly, played with nerve and keenness. In point of structure, directness, absence of 'moralities,' and easy and rapid character-development it is vastly superior to the last shoddy Princess's production. (*Pace* your own views in the matter.) Miss Carlotta Addison, Mrs. Coplestone, Miss May Mellon, Miss Leslie Chester, and Mrs. Cecil Clay, bright and buoyant as of yore, when known as Rosina Vokes, came to Canterbury to assist the 'O.S.,' and the public testified their appreciation by producing the largest houses ever known in the records of these players. The 'epilogue' at these shows is not of the monologue sort Rosalind delivered in 'As You Like It,' but is a small play in itself, fanciful and audaciously amateurish. This year it took the form of a Lord Mayor's banquet, when the princes and powers, and heraldic beasts, and various fairies were invited, and much fun ensued thereby. The audience, naturally composed of cricketers, enjoyed the introduction of the local as well as political allusions, welcomed the game of cricket, cleverly played by Mrs. Clay on the stage, and accepted in kindly spirit the poetical 'tag,' given with real feeling by Miss Addison. The author, 'Frère Sauvage' is, I fancy, known to your readers."

It is with much regret that we announce the death of E. F. Pellew, an occasional contributor to this magazine. In private life, his warm-hearted, genial disposition endeared him to all whom he drew around him, and to his many friends there is now left only the memory of one of the best of good fellows. His literary career has been cut short while budding into popularity; it was full of promise, now broken and never to be realised. The last of his lyrics was a song entitled "When Dreamland may at last be Home," set to music by Mrs. Arthur Goodeve, and

published by Hutchings and Co., New Bond Street. One verse seems so strongly to indicate the coming event that we cannot refrain from quoting it.

"Yet still methinks the time will come
When no new morn shall ope mine eyes,
When dreamland may at last be home,
And I may wake in Paradise."

It is with a sincere and personal regret that I have to announce the sad, sudden, and untimely death of the popular comedian, Mr. Harry Jackson, who was as enthusiastic as an actor as he was cheery as a companion. Mr. Harry Jackson had travelled far, mixed with all sorts and conditions of men, most of whom he had studied thoroughly and accurately. The experiences of this kind-hearted and amiable gentleman, and his ups and downs in America, Australia, and odd corners of the wide world, would make a most interesting chapter in the romance of life. In quiet social moments he would describe with a rare power of description and illustration adventures in America only second to those recorded by Bret Harte, and theatrical stories of Australian life, which throw a strong light on the exciting careers of Lola Montez and the Australian favourites Sir William and Lady Don. He was one of the kindest of men, and most amusing of companions. No one could tell a better story or more thoroughly enjoyed the recital of one from other lips—a rare circumstance in a professed *raconteur*. An anxious and hard life, full of struggle and frequent disappointments, never soured this genial and thoroughly good fellow. We have had many chats together about the present and the past, but I never heard Harry Jackson say one unkind or ill-natured word of anyone. With a jovial and companionable manner to strangers, he was to those who knew him best the most tender-hearted and sensitive creature, and he would take bitterly to heart any misunderstanding that temporarily estranged him from an old friend. He was as keenly sensible of injustice as his old and constant friend, Charles Reade, but as ready as he was to forgive an injury, and manfully to "bury the hatchet."

Harry Jackson's career on the stage was governed and, to a certain extent, limited by circumstances. Although an actor of considerable versatility and experience, he fell into an odd love of character in London. The eccentric Jews, and the odd comic characters closely identified with London life and the purely Cockney side of it fell, as a matter of right, to Harry Jackson. He was the idol of Drury Lane and the hero of Whitechapel. The artist had so thoroughly studied the peculiarities and eccentricities of London life amongst the lower orders that he was welcomed as a fellow sufferer or as a boon companion. The exaggeration with which this comedian has been charged in some of his most eccentric characters was not so much due to his own deficiency of a sense of artistic fitness, but an utter ignorance of it on the part of those he was paid to amuse. In some respects an English audience is the most ignorant of the finer qualities of characterisation of any audience in the world. It insists on having the mortar of its humour laid on, not with a silver trowel, but with the spade of a navvy. I was always a firm believer in the faith

that Harry Jackson was a far better comedian than fate ever allowed him to be. In addition to his skill as an actor he was an excellent stage-manager, a first-rate man of business, and one of the most genial and popular men who have ever directed public entertainments in town or country. At many a convivial gathering, and in most theatrical circles, the cheery voice of Harry Jackson will be missed, and the utmost sympathy will be extended to the amiable lady and faithful wife who helped his life and cheered his simple home, and to her accomplished mother, an actress of the old school, whom he idolised, although she bore the reproachful name of "mother-in-law." May the earth rest lightly over this companionable and kind-hearted fellow!

The engagement or Mrs. Bernand-Beere at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal has resulted in adding another to the long catalogue of brilliant triumphs which have marked her rising career. She opened on Monday, August 11th, to a crowded house, and throughout the entire fortnight—notwithstanding the vacation season of the year, when managers are contented if they can only pull through safely—she has not played to anything but what would be termed "good business." She appeared during the first week as Fedora, in her presentment of which she rivals the Parisian *première*. While she was on the stage the audience were held breathless, as it were, by some sympathetic bond, some magnetic influence, which stretched between them and the actress. Her voice is as a spell, and her acting a fascination. On a comparison with Madame Sarah Bernhardt's performance, Mrs. Bernard-Beere's performance is found to be a marvellously close duplication of the French original. If in the finale she does not attain to such a height of terribly tragic power as that with which Madame Bernhardt is wont to electrify the house, it is apparent that she has given more thought and more study to the minor action of the play. Her Peg Woffington in "Masks and Faces," which was the part she assumed during the second week, she plays on the lines of the original creator—Mrs. Stirling. She surrounds this character—so different from her other great impersonation—with an irresistible charm. As the warm-hearted, fun-loving orange-girl transformed into the reigning actress of the day, she touched the hearts of the audience, moving them at times to laughter, and at times to tears. Mrs. Bernard-Beere is ably supported by Mr. J. H. Barnes and Mr. C. H. Brookfield, the former of whom was an adequate representative of Loris Ipanoff in "Fedora," and the latter justified his Haymarket reputation by his delineation of Triplet in "Masks and Faces."

THE THEATRE.

Miss Mary Anderson.

By William Archer.

IT is not three years since Miss Mary Anderson first came among us, a young American girl, heralded only by undeniable evidence (the sun being witness) of her striking beauty, and conflicting rumours as to her talent. She is now returning to her native land an artistic and social notability of the first magnitude. Her success is all the more remarkable—certainly all the more creditable—in that it has been gained entirely by her own unaided efforts in the art she professes. She had no social notoriety to launch her on her career, nor did she take any pains to acquire it. She shunned rather than courted personal publicity. She did not ride on fire-engines or sleep in coffins. Scandal, even in this malevolent world, held aloof from her, and if silly gossip now and then gave her "the puff oblique," it was without her connivance and to her no small discomfort. It may even be said that she was deliberately and injudiciously contemptuous of all personal means of propitiation. To some people, unable to dissociate the two ideas of "dramatic artist" and "eccentric bohemian," her attitude appeared unwarrantably repellent, and she suffered in more ways than one from a certain unapproachableness which was construed as the feminine form of that foible which in the stronger sex we call priggishness. Even criticism was not unaffected by this feeling, and she was treated, I do not say with injustice, but certainly with scant cordiality. She has won the public with little help from the press, and that, in these days, is of itself a remarkable achievement.

In this, it seems to me, the public has shown a just instinct, and it is because I take this view, and am able to speak with sincere admiration of most of Miss Anderson's work, that I venture to

undertake this brief retrospect of her performances in England. I do so in spite of one serious disqualification, to wit, my having missed the first two of these performances. At the time of Miss Anderson's first appearance I was abroad, and on my return to England the aforesaid coldness of the press (aided, perhaps, by a lack of enthusiasm for Mrs. Lovell and Lord Lytton) prevented me from making any haste to become acquainted with the new American actress. Accordingly I missed her Parthenia and her Pauline. It was not until the first night of "Comedy and Tragedy" that I summoned up sufficient curiosity to go and see the much-photographed fair one; and even then it was Mr. Gilbert's name on the playbill rather than Miss Anderson's that tempted me to fight my way into the Lyceum pit—not in those days such a luxurious point of observation as to predispose one favourably by sheer force of physical well-being. Everything tended, then, to bias me against Miss Anderson, yet I left the theatre that evening convinced by her Galatea of the rare quality of her talent, and by her Clarice of its remarkable range. This conviction was strengthened by a further study of her performance of these parts, was not shaken by her Juliet, unsatisfactory though it was, and has recently been confirmed by her charming Rosalind. My average estimate of her achievement would perhaps have been lower had I seen her Parthenia and Pauline, which, for reasons to be mentioned presently, may possibly have shared the inferiority of her Juliet. But in things of art an "average estimate" is an absurdity. A chain is as strong as its weakest link, but, contrariwise, the strongest of a series of artistic efforts affords the measure of its success. An "average estimate" would bring many a heaven-storming reputation to the dust, and among the celebrities of the day Miss Anderson would perhaps not be the one to suffer most by it.

It is no paradox to say that Miss Anderson's beauty has hindered her acceptance at her true artistic value. "Her talent," it is said quite truly, "would be of little avail without her beauty," and hence the conclusion is drawn that her talent is small. This is totally illogical. The same remark might have been made about Mrs. Siddons, but who would draw the same conclusion? The point is a delicate one, but for my part I see nothing very exceptional in Miss Anderson's beauty. Without her talent it would be just sufficient to entitle her to a fairly prominent place among the vestals who tend the sacred lamp of burlesque. Her features are too sharp

to be classically ideal, and, on the other hand, her face lacks, not refinement indeed, but that subtle charm, that glamour, that magnetism which makes some women irresistible. Her grace, which simply means the use she makes of her physical advantages, is quite another matter. It forms part, and perhaps the most remarkable part, of her talent. It is very exceptional, if not unique. Perhaps the distinction I wish to draw may be illustrated by a reference to two famous passages in which two poets have spoken of another beauty, not without renown in her day. When Helen of Troy rises before the gaze of Marlowe's Faustus he exclaims :—

> Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars !

The intense, mystic, one may almost say Rossettian, beauty suggested by those lovely lines no one would think of attributing to Miss Anderson ; but, on the other hand, Tennyson's description of the same "fair woman" as

> "A daughter of the gods, divinely tall
> And most divinely fair"

might be applied without hyperbole to our American Galatea. Her beauty—and this is the point I would be at—is not of the Circean order, enthralling the senses and perverting the judgment. It is good, honest, healthy comeliness, a precious gift, but not a talisman to conjure with. It throws merit into relief, but it would scarcely cover a multitude of sins. To inquire whether Miss Anderson owes more to her beauty than to her talent is like inquiring whether hydrogen or oxygen is the more important element in the composition of water. The chemical formula for water, it may be said, is H_2O, and so the analysis of Miss Anderson's endowment might perhaps give us the formula B_2T—two parts of beauty to one of talent. But the weight of the oxygen is as eight to one, and it is, after all, the life-sustaining element.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have purposely avoided the word "genius." Genius, I take it, is talent with a superadded magnetism, an incommunicable, indefinable somewhat, a gift received so directly from nature as to seem almost supernatural. Now Miss Anderson's talent seems to me as unmagnetic as her beauty. She charms, but she does not enrapture. Her art rises through three degrees—clever, cleverer, cleverest—but it does not soar beyond measurement or comparison into the region of inspiration. So much I willingly allow to her detractors, merely contending that we are not in these

days so rich in genius as to be able coldly to dismiss graceful, accomplished, and, in its way, unique talent.

Galatea, to descend to particulars, remains Miss Anderson's highest achievement. I never saw Mrs. Kendal's performance of the part, which doubtless had its own inimitable merits, but it can scarcely have been more exquisite than Miss Anderson's. She glides, a being from another world, through the impure air of Mr. Gilbert's cockney Attica. She has been called cold and artificial; for my part, I wish we had a little more such coldness and artifice. Every intonation, every gesture, every pose is so convincingly right that we are at once convinced there must be something wrong. An occasional false emphasis, a jog-trot delivery of verse, with an accent on every monosyllable, a tendency to attitudinise at all hazards, in and out of season—these are the graces, certainly inartificial, which we have been taught to appreciate and admire. An artist comes who speaks with just inflexions, whose movements form a glowing commentary, or rather a subtly-modulated accompaniment, to the lines she is uttering—and, behold! her art is artifice, and we proclaim her "faultily faultless, splendidly null." No more in this part than in others does she electrify us with flashes of inspiration; but in this part we miss them less, for who can expect to be thrilled very deeply through the medium of Mr. Gilbert's pathos? She introduces some exquisite touches of pure womanliness, which approach inspiration, but the true merit of her performance lies in its even, unbroken charm. At the risk of an apparent anti-climax, I may say that the quality which pleases me most in her Galatea is its inoffensiveness. This may seem very negative praise, but as things go it amounts to a panegyric. How often is it given us to leave a theatre feeling that there has been no false note, no jar, no discord, in the performance we have witnessed? Miss Anderson does all that can be done to make Galatea tolerable; yet one would like to know whether Mr. Gilbert's conscience does not tingle a little at some of the lines he puts into her mouth and some of the situations in which he places her.

"Comedy and Tragedy" again is a mere show-piece, a recitation in dramatic setting, interesting as a proof of Miss Anderson's versatility, but not otherwise noteworthy. It shows that she can give rein to her passion without letting it get the bit between its teeth and carry her away into bombast. She can be forcible without ranting, a power which she owes mainly to her wonderful voice. It

is not to everyone a pleasing organ, but there can be no doubt of its power and compass, or of the skill with which Miss Anderson usually handles it. Clarice's recitation or "improvisation" is one of her cleverest achievements. If she can be said ever to have electrified an audience, it was with this most original piece of acting on the first night of "Comedy and Tragedy."*

Juliet, I am told by one who has followed Miss Anderson's career from its beginning with sympathetic interest, was one of the first parts, if not the very first, in which she ever appeared. She was very young, very untrained, very raw. It was a moral and physical impossibility that her rendering of a character which demands the deepest study and the rarest technical skill should be other than very imperfect. The industry and eagerness for self-improvement which are strong forces in Miss Anderson's nature have since corrected her methods, and ripening years have brought ripened powers of comprehension; so that Galatea, one of her later parts, and Rosalind, her very latest, are strong and mature performances, while in Juliet (and perhaps in Pauline and Parthenia) she has never quite thrown off the shallow conceptions and bad habits adopted while she was yet a girl in her teens. Her Juliet, to adapt Mrs. Poyser's phrase, should be conceived over again and conceived differently. It totally lacks distinction, depth, and subtlety. The opening passages, in ball-room and balcony, are treated as scenes of light comedy. Juliet is an American school-girl, with a considerable sense of humour, drifting into a not over-dignified flirtation with a sentimental young man. The passages of lyric rapture are spoken

* Some of the defects of Mr. Gilbert's ingenious little play are inseparable from the subject, but others are avoidable, and consequently irritating. Why, in the first place, does he change the Duc de Richelieu of his sketch into the much more definite historic figure of the Duc d'Orléans, Regent of France, thus trebling the unreality of the whole construction? Why does the best stage manager in England allow the said Regent to promenade at large about the room, so that he has but to take two bounds to be with his friends in the upper story, and laughs at the pair who have so ingeniously trapped him? Surely the whole point of the situation is gone when D'Aulnay makes no attempt to block his passage to the stairs, by which it would be his first instinct to escape. Could not the business of the key be a little less clumsily managed? And, finally, is it not a little inhuman of the whole party to drop into an elegant tableau around the victorious D'Aulnay, utterly unmindful of the unfortunate Regent of France, who is "wounded to the death" in the back garden? Dr. Choquart seems, indeed, to be a bit of a Jacobin, or at least a Girondin, born out of due time; but for the credit of his profession he could scarcely refrain from offering some assistance even to such a bloated Bourbon as the Regent, instead of calmly leaving him to welter at leisure in his blue blood.

without the slightest feeling for their lyric quality. It is even noteworthy, as bearing out the theory of immaturity, that whereas in Galatea and Rosalind Miss Anderson speaks the verse of her part with perfect correctness, in Juliet she more than once interpolates or misplaces words, to the destruction of the metre. In the more emotional passages Miss Anderson's fine qualities make themselves apparent, but in a formless, ineffective way. The potion scene lacks gradation, and in the scene where she learns of Romeo's banishment she manages for once to strain her voice, and positively rants. Two really fine passages relieve the general mediocrity of the performance—to wit, the coaxing scene with the nurse, and the scene in the Friar's cell. The charm of the latter passage comes mainly, perhaps, from her superb management of her draperies, but charming it is beyond denial.

Of Miss Anderson's Julia in "The Hunchback" I shall say nothing. The play is to me such a weariness of the flesh that I have no idea how the character of the heroine should be played. My opinion is that it should *not* be played. Miss Anderson was stately, graceful, and I believe intelligent, in the part, but she could not galvanise it into even a semblance of vitality.

Let us pass, then, to Miss Anderson's latest and most interesting effort—her Rosalind. The critics who criticise before the event were full of doubts as to her capacity for comedy. Juliet's scene with the Nurse should have banished any such doubt. It proved Miss Anderson's possession of a fund of delicate playfulness which could not but stand her in good stead in the part of the sprightly Ganymede. This quality was, indeed, apparent throughout; but, as Lady Martin remarks, it is a "strange perversion" to suppose that Rosalind can be adequately performed by actresses "whose strength lies only in comedy." There is in her a "deep womanly tenderness," and an "intellect disciplined by fine culture," which must be made apparent through all her sportive vivacity. In the "deep womanly tenderness" Miss Anderson was, perhaps, a little lacking. Her Rosalind was girlish rather than womanly, but it was so brightly, frankly, healthily girlish that to have quarrelled with it would have been sheer captiousness. In the opening scenes (it must be remembered that I speak of her first performance of the part, a most trying occasion) she had not altogether warmed to her work, though even here she was intelligent and charming. Her speech to the Duke, culminating in the line, "What's that

to me? My father was no traitor!" showed traces of her early and unpolished manner. It lacked nobility and loftiness. Its indignation was too loud. It was invective rather than self-restrained and scathing sarcasm. Not till she appeared in the first forest scene was Miss Anderson's success assured, but then a very few speeches placed it beyond question. Her appearance was ideal. No actress whom I have seen in Rosalind, or indeed in any "doublet and hose" part, wears these trying garments with anything like the ease, grace, and perfect good taste displayed by Miss Anderson. In most Rosalinds the woman obtrudes herself upon the physical as well as the mental eye. We cannot get rid of the feeling that Orlando must inevitably see through this masquerade from the very first. In Miss Anderson's case we meet with no such stumbling-block. A cleverly-designed costume, modest without prudery, combined with her lithe, well-knit and in no way redundant figure to make her a perfect embodiment of the "saucy lackey." Her beauty, which is essentially feminine, was the only circumstance which need have made Orlando suspect the woman in her, if (to oblige Shakespeare) we suppose it possible that he should fail to recognise her as the identical Rosalind of the wrestling-match. Her claret-coloured mantle, exquisitely handled, gave her the means for much significant by-play through which she prevented the audience from forgetting her sex, without in any way suggesting it to Orlando. Its tastefulness was perhaps the great charm of her Rosalind. In it, as in Galatea, there was nothing that jarred, nothing that was either unintelligent or vulgar. She might have made the comedy richer and more irresistible; she might have emphasised traditional points which, whether by accident or design, she slurred over; she might even have given to Rosalind a distinction and tenderness, in short a touch of poetry, which was not present in her performance. But, on the other hand, all that *was* present was natural, thoughtful, graceful, attractive. The defects of omission were not so glaring as to disturb our pleasure, the sins of commission were almost nil, scarcely more than an injudiciously-managed faint when she learns of Orlando's wound, and a not sufficiently insinuating delivery of the Epilogue. Further performances will certainly improve and mature a few points which leave room for a little elaboration, but they are in reality few. The full depth and tenderness of the part, on the other hand, will perhaps always remain beyond Miss Anderson's reach, for they are a matter of magnetism; but even without

them I, for my part, do not wish for a pleasanter Rosalind than hers.

On reading over what I have written it occurs to me that I have adopted a polemical tone which may perhaps seem uncalled for. It may be asked in what my estimate of Miss Anderson differs from the current and generally received critical judgment. The difference is partly that I give Miss Anderson greater credit than has generally been allowed her for her command of the technical methods of her craft. But the main difference is that whereas most of her critics have found Miss Anderson neither magnetic nor sympathetic, I admit her lack of magnetism, but find her endowment sympathetic in a high degree.

A Question.

. . . . romprons-nous,
Ou ne romprons nous pas ?
Le Dépit Amoureux.

SWEET, I have loved you so these long years past,
With all the passion of my ardent youth
That o'er our lives a lovely glamour cast ;
I staked my honour on your ceaseless truth.
And now ! With dreary wonderment I miss
The clinging tenderness of long ago,
The gentle sympathy, the answering kiss, . .
. . . And I have loved you so !

Dear, for one hour, one little hour to-night,
We two must face the weary length of years
That looms before us, bare of all delight,
And heralded by bitter heart-drawn tears.
Are we to break the ever-loosening chain
That held us once so closely in its keep ?
Or will the sharpness of our present pain
Be lulled by patience to a fitful sleep ?

Dear, in your hands I leave our after fate,
With but one prayer for all the old love's sake :
If you should answer, it is all too late
To dream a dead affection should awake,
Speak without bitterness. Around us lie
The tender memories of long ago,
That witness mournfully our last good-bye,—
. . . And I have loved you so !

M. E. W.

The Life of an Actor.

By Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

TWO years ago Ernesto Rossi's thoughtful and sagacious analysis of the play and character of "Hamlet," or, rather, an abridged English version of that interesting treatise, was published in this magazine; and a little later it was my privilege to furnish the readers of The Theatre with a description of the great Italian tragedian's home in the beautiful valley of the Arno, where I had been his guest during a memorable autumn holiday. The lively public interest displayed in these papers at the time of their issue, and their subsequent reproduction by a large number of influential provincial journals, were attributable, no doubt, to the eminently sympathetic character of their subject, and to the fact, well-known to many Englishmen connected with dramatic literature and the stage, that the creation and maintenance of a taste for Shakespeare's works in Italy was mainly the outcome of Rossi's talent, enterprise, and enthusiastic worship of our inimitable national poet. Despite the diversity of opinion that then prevailed, and still prevails, in this country as to the histrionic merits of Ernesto Rossi—who, unfortunately, was seen to great disadvantage by the London public during his last professional visit to this metropolis, owing to the infelicitous artistic conditions by which he was surrounded—his services to the great Shakespearean cause in his own and many other lands were generally known and gratefully acknowledged by the dramatic profession here, whose leading members took occasion to pay him a cordial and unstinted tribute of admiration and regard.

A short series of autobiographical letters, addressed by Rossi to his old friend and admirer, Angelo de Gubernatis, a distinguished Italian man of letters, and published quite recently at Florence, has just reached me. The letters, as Signor de Gubernatis explains in a brief prefatory statement, were written at his earnest request,

and deal chiefly with their author's early life, the incidents and accidents that led to his adoption of the dramatic career, despite the most strenuous opposition on the part of his family, and the adventures through which he passed during his efforts to attain eminence in the profession of his choice. In the conviction that a few extracts from Rossi's spirited narrative of his youthful experiences will prove welcome reading, not only to his English fellow-actors of both sexes, but to every one interested in the Shakespearean drama and its gifted exponents, of foreign as well as native birth, I have resolved to attempt to condense the story told in the "Lettere Autobiografiche," now lying on my desk, within the limits of a magazine article.

Ernesto Fortunato Giovanni Maria Rossi is the fifth son of parents belonging to the Tuscan *haute bourgeoisie*, and natives of Leghorn, where he was born some sixty years ago, in a third floor of the Via San Francesco. He owed his second name to the auspicious circumstance that he was *né coiffé*, it being a deeply-rooted article of popular belief throughout the Ausonian peninsula that a child born with a caul is predestined to be lucky throughout life. He also came into the world with his eyes wide open, and, a few seconds after his birth, set up so loud and piercing a cry that one of the old women present on the occasion exclaimed "What lungs! You will see, he will be a singer." "Certainly not," rejoined his father; "he shall be a lawyer." "It's all one," replied the aged gossip. But neither prediction was realised. Rossi's maternal grandfather, a handsome and vigorous old gentleman, who lived to the age of ninety-six in the full possession of all his mental faculties, exercised great influence over him during his childish years; for the "nonno" was an inveterate *raconteur* of legends, fairy tales, and theatrical plots. He was thoroughly versed in the stories upon which Shakespeare had founded his immortal tragedies; and, when little Ernesto was only five or six years old, his grandfather, with whom he spent an hour every evening before going to bed, sitting on the venerable narrator's knee, and listening greedily to one tale after another, had become as familiar with the leading incidents of "King Lear," "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Timon of Athens," "Coriolanus," and "Julius Cæsar," as with those of Bluebeard and Mother Goose. "Incredible as it may seem," he writes to De Gubernatis, "at that tender age, and without even knowing his name, I was already *en rapport* with the Poet who subsequently became my favourite author, and to

whom I am indebted for renown and wealth." The first manifest result of his indoctrination in the mysteries of the drama was his fabrication, at eight years old, of a miniature stage and a small company of wooden players, with which he gave a performance of a thrilling melodrama of his own composition, entitled "Claudio the Fratricide, or a Father judged by his own Son," to an audience consisting of his own family and a few of the neighbours with whom the Rossis were intimately acquainted. His entertainment achieved a brilliant success, and next day his grandfather presented to him a complete toy-theatre, with shifting scenes, abundant "properties," and a numerous cardboard company, tastefully costumed and appointed. For several months after his reception of this gift he performed a play every Sunday evening to his relatives and friends, and distinguished himself no less conspicuously as stage-manager than as elocutionist, dramatic author, and adapter of foreign plays from the "arguments" supplied to him by his beloved "nonno." He was allowed now and then—but very rarely—to visit the day-theatre frequented by the Livornesi on Sunday afternoons, and at that time under the management of Domeniconi and Pelzet, two famous Italian actors fifty years ago. It was in that house, the "Arena Labronica," that he saw his first real acted play, "The Ghost of a Living Man, or the Orphan of Switzerland," which made a deep impression upon him; more especially the acting of Signora Pelzet, then in the full bloom of her beauty and gifted with a strangely sympathetic voice. It was in Domeniconi's company, by the way, that Adelaide Ristori came out, and played for several successive years, establishing herself solidly in public favour as an excellent "all-round" actress long before she attained world-wide celebrity.

Rossi's boyhood, from his tenth to his fourteenth year, was divided between the classical studies to which his father compelled his attention and the amateur dramatic performances in which he himself took an ever-increasing delight. They had to be kept strictly secret from Rossi senr., who was a man of business, sternly resolved that the most gifted of his sons should read for the bar. The notion that Ernesto's true vocation was the stage, hinted to him from time to time by family friends, never failed to move him to violent indignation. On one occasion his trade as a timber-merchant compelled him to be absent for several weeks from home, during which time Ernesto and one of his playmates—young Delle

Sedie, afterwards an eminent operatic singer and teacher in Paris—actually constructed a theatre in a wood-shed attached to the Rossi counting-house, with wings, scenery, a drop and curtain all complete. There were only two stalls—reserved for Rossi's mother and grandfather, who attended the performences nightly—but an audience of nearly fifty in number could, at a pinch, be crammed into the "pit." The two boys constituted the entire company, fulfilling the functions of actors, scene-painters and shifters, carpenters, lamplighters, and attendants. On their opening night, they gave Metastasio's 'Damon and Pythias," with tremendous success. It was, in theatrical parlance, a "great go," and ran uninterruptedly to crowded houses for several nights, until Ernesto's father returned to Leghorn unexpectedly one day, found his shed converted into a Temple of Thespis, ruthlessly pulled the whole stage and its fittings to pieces, and made a bonfire of the fragments in his wood-yard, insisting that Ernesto and his "fellow-conspirator" should be present at the incineration of their beloved theatre. This terrible calamity crushed them; but not for long. With the aid of their respective relatives and friends, they soon set up a new theatre of their own in the Via Maggi, and got together a numerous company, in which Ernesto Rossi figured as "leading lady!" He was a plump boy, with long fair hair and rosy cheeks, and played the parts of Mirandolina and Rosaura to admiration. Again, however, his father found him out, and compelled him to dismantle his theatre. The time was come for the youthful Roscius to enter the "humanities" class at the San Sebastiano, a scholastic step involving the passing of a heavy exam. in Cicero, Virgil, and Horace. By a tremendous effort of application, Ernesto managed to go through this ordeal triumphantly; and his delighted father, ceremoniously investing him with a white cravat, as if it had been an Order of Chivalry, embraced him fondly, saying "My boy, you shall be a great lawyer;" "whereupon" (writes Rossi) "I whispered to myself, 'The deuce a bit! I shall be a great actor.'"

Again and again, during his college career—a brilliant one, on the whole, during which he acquired considerable local celebrity as a reciter of Latin and Italian verse—he got into trouble through his passion for theatrical representations, but contrived to gain a thorough knowledge of the stage "business" then in vogue, and to commit an incredible number of parts to memory, so that there was hardly a play of any note in the dramatic *répertoire* of that

period with the leading and secondary *rôles* of which he was not sufficiently familiar to have undertaken them at a few hours' notice. Shortly after he had completed his "course of rhetoric" at San Sebastiano, and was on the point of leaving Leghorn to matriculate at the University of Pisa, his eldest brother, Emilio, whom his father had started in the banking business, suddenly became a bankrupt, and the family had to exhaust all its available resources in order to discharge his liabilities. This mishap led to prolonged absences of his father from home, during which Ernesto gave full rein to his theatrical proclivities, and pestered one theatrical manager after another to give him a trial engagement. At last the Calloud company visited Leghorn on tour, and Ernesto lost no time in presenting himself to the impresario, whom he addressed as follows :—" Excuse me, sir, is any one of your actors ill ? Do you want a first lover ? I am your man. Look at me well ; examine me. I am young and well made. I can read and write. I speak my words clearly and correctly ; try me." This boldness took Calloud's fancy, who replied, " Bravo, my lad ! You please me well, and your proposal is as apt as rain in summer-time. Here is a small part for you, which you may play this evening, if you can. Have you a good memory ?" " Haven't I !" " Do you know Goldoni's ' Ventaglio ?' " " By heart, every word of it." (This was a lie). " You shall play the Baron ; the actor who was to have played it to-night is unwell ; you shall take his place." " With all my heart !" Rossi rushed home, devoured his dinner, studied his lines, and spoke them on the boards without a fault in due course, receiving the congratulations of all the principal members of the company. Next morning, Calloud asked him whether he felt equal to playing Paolo, in the drama hight " Francesca di Rimini." Of course he replied in the affirmative, and acted the part successfully after four rehearsals.

" That evening," writes Rossi, " I frankly confess, when I found myself standing behind the footlights, arrayed as a warrior, I all but collapsed. The blood rushed to my head in blinding, deafening waves. I spoke my lines, because I was letter-perfect in them ; but I was absolutely unconscious of what I was saying or doing. All I remember is that the three partners in the concern came into my dressing-room and offered me an engagement for the following year as " first lover," at a salary of three shillings a day. Need I say that I jumped at the offer ? Next morning I signed my first en-

gagement with infinite pride and joy. Alas! the son proposed, but the father disposed! My progenitor knew all; the manager had written to him about it, and he had hurried back from Genoa to Leghorn, seemingly on the wings of the wind. What a scene there was of thrilling domestic interest! He was about to hurl an indignant parent's curse at my head, when I averted the malediction by exclaiming:—"The law be it, then! Quick, despatch me straight off to Pisa, or I'll run away for good!" "I will sell my skin to the tanners," replied my father, "but what you shall complete your studies." He embraced me, I repented, and he forgave me. But fortune stood my friend. The following day, as I was strolling down the Via Grande, I met a low comedian whose acquaintance I had made at the Arena Labronica. This good fellow confided to me that he had just arrived from Fojano, where his company was playing, on a special mission to hunt up a character-actor and "some young fellow to play the lovers." "What!" I exclaimed; "you want a young lover? Take me!" A bargain was soon struck in a neighbouring café; Ernesto was to draw a pound a week—"a liberal salary," his friend assured him, "for it cost absolutely nothing to live at Fojano"—and play walking gentlemen and general utility. He contrived to persuade his grandfather to join him in a conspiracy to get his clothes away from home, on the pretext of visiting an uncle, who was the Prior of Marcignana, near Empoli, and that evening he quitted his father's house, being just eighteen years old, to embark in a profession of which he was destined to become the brightest ornament in his native land. He soon quitted the strolling company which he had joined at Fojano, and was engaged by Gustavo Modena, of whom he speaks as "that lofty mind and noble heart," to play leading business. Amongst the parts entrusted to him by this kind and enterprising manager were Don Carlos, Orestes, Max Piccolomini in "Wallenstein," and David, in a famous tragedy of that day, entituled "Saul." It was at Milan, in the last-named *rôle*, that he achieved one of the greatest triumphs of his brilliant career. At the time referred to he had been for nearly two years a member of the Modena company; but his father had steadfastly refused to forgive him for running away from home and taking to the stage. Let Rossi himself narrate the episode in which he takes such justifiable pride.

"I was really a good David—at least Modena said so—in my twentieth year. One evening, at the close of the third act, the

public called me out before the curtain several times, and I returned to my dressing-room in an extremely happy frame of mind. Almost immediately somebody tapped at the door and opened it; a white-haired old gentleman, whose eyes were reddened and wet with weeping, entered, threw his arms round my neck, and strained me to his bosom, exclaiming: 'I thought you were good for nothing, a mere stick, like so many others. But I was wrong. You have made me cry. I forgive you; let us say no more about it. But remember, as you have chosen this career, you must never fail to do your duty in it. Study, progress, don't let applause make you idle. If you feel that you have not strength of will to do this, give up the stage and come back home.' 'Father,' I replied, 'your forgiveness will increase my confidence and courage.' 'Enough, enough; as soon as the tragedy shall be finished I'll come and fetch you. We will sup together, and you shall tell me all that has happened to you during the past two years and a half. Do you want money? Tell me what you require, and you shall have it.' 'No, papa,' I answered; 'I was poor whilst you shut me out of your heart. From this night forth I shall be Crœsus himself.' I accepted, however, an old family watch which he pulled out of his fob, and insisted upon giving to me. It had a massive double case of gold, adorned with diamond sparks, and he regarded it as a sacred relic of his deceased progenitor. Alas! it was stolen from me a few days later during a popular demonstration at the Porta Renza, organised by the Milanese in honour of Archbishop Romilli, whom they mistook for a good patriot."

On March 11, 1848, the company managed by Gustavo Modena arrived from Venice at Milan, there to give a series of performances in the Canobbiana Theatre. The revolution had broken out the previous day, when the Archduke Rainer, the Imperial Viceroy, had fled to Vienna. One of Rossi's cousins, a youth of about his own age, met him at the office before which the diligence stopped, and, calling him aside, thrust a pistol into his hand, whispering: "It is loaded. Come with me!" "And my trunk?" "It is safe enough here. There is no time to lose. They are making barricades. Quick, or we shall not be able to get to the Porta Romana!" The two lads rushed off, and for the five ensuing days, as Rossi himself moderately puts it, "did—well, what all the others did. This I may at least say, without boasting: we ate little, slept less, and fought when we were obliged to, weeping bitterly for the loss of many dear

ones, who perished under our very eyes. By a miracle, neither of us was hurt. After the memorable 'five days,' I went to claim my trunk. It was gone, and my whole fortune with it—three or four pounds." For some weeks—the company to which he belonged having been broken up—he managed to live, lodgings included, on fifteen pence a day. Finally, however, the small indemnity paid to him by the Diligence Company for losing his luggage being exhausted, he was about to enlist as a soldier (not choosing to become a burden to his family), when he encountered the veteran comedian, Moncalvo, who had set up a wooden barn in the Piazza Castello, where he was playing nightly with a scratch company, and who offered Ernesto an engagement "with the lead," at thirty-six shillings a week. In this establishment he remained for a considerable time, scoring success after success, and improving his acting by the light of old Moncalvo's judicious advice. When Modena had collected his scattered colleagues, however, Rossi rejoined the Calloud Company under the direction of that excellent actor, and stuck to it for nearly three years, during which period accrued the genesis of his Shakespearean career, recounted by himself as follows :—

"I was taking coffee with Modena one afternoon at his house in Venice, sitting at a table laden with heaps of printed and manuscript plays. Two of the latter, in particular, happened to catch my eye ; they were bound in quaint, old covers, bearing the titles 'Othello' and 'Hamlet.' 'Have you played these tragedies?' I asked my host. 'I have studied them,' he replied ; 'but as for playing them'—and he took 'Othello' out of my hand—'look here!' (pointing to the first scene) I once managed to get this much of 'The Moor of Venice' acted.' 'I don't understand ; was anybody taken ill? Had you to stop the performance?' 'We had, indeed, and to lower the curtain. This is what took place. I had procured a translation of 'Othello,' and adapted it as well as I could to our theatrical customs and the public taste. I studied the title rôle myself, and set the piece, though doubtful of its success ; for our public likes the classics ; the Aristotelian rules are printed on its brain ; depart from them, and it will rend you.' 'But, *maestro*, the Italian public is highly intelligent.' 'Be quiet, don't talk nonsense! Well, the time came for our first performance of 'Othello,' and we were all terribly nervous—I even more so than the rest. The curtain rose on the first scene between Iago and Roderigo ;

and when the latter commenced shouting 'What, ho! Brabantio! Signor Brabantio, ho! Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags! Thieves! thieves!' The public began to murmur, 'What's this? A tragedy or a farce?' Presently, when Brabantio appeared on his balcony, asking what was the matter, and the others questioned him as to whether all his family were within, and his doors locked, the audience broke out into shouts of laughter and storms of hisses, so that, after a few minutes' hideous clamour, I was obliged to let fall the curtain, cursing myself for my folly. Othello washed his face; Desdemona went home to her father again; the Turks remained masters of Cyprus; I took Mr. Shakespeare under my arm and put him to sleep. My dear boy, you must give our public the food that suits its stomach; otherwise it digests badly, and consequently becomes as insolent and snappish as a lady's lap-dog.'" Rossi asked his old friend to give him the two manuscripts, and was told to take them, and do what he pleased with them. He carried them home, and sat up all night reading them. They were a revelation to him; but he was not satisfied with them as versions of Shakespeare's two greatest tragedies (they were abridgments of Leoni's translations), and straightway set about hunting up those executed by Rosconi, which, though couched in somewhat antiquated phraseology, pleased him better—especially "Hamlet." He was less satisfied with "Othello;" and, becoming acquainted shortly afterwards with the illustrious poet, Giulio Carcano, who was an accomplished English scholar, besought him to re-translate that play into Italian blank verse, which Carcano consented to do.

Three years later (1852) Carcano's version of "Othello" was completed. At that time Rossi was a member of the Royal company at Turin, managed by Bonghi, who declined to make any Shakespearean experiments whatsoever. In 1855 Rossi accompanied Adelaide Ristori on tour to Paris, where they played with great success at the Salle Ventadour, the Wallack company alternating with them, and performing, amongst other pieces, "Macbeth," "The Merchant of Venice," "Hamlet," and "Othello." Of Wallack Rossi writes: "He was a conscientious actor, but nothing surprising; a follower of traditions. His Othello was too northern; his Hamlet, an American. I had been studying English assiduously; but I could not understand a word he said on the stage. Just then, someone told me that Edmund Kean's son was acting in London;

so off I went to London. There I was only able to see Charles Kean in 'Richard the Third'—for pieces that please in London run a year or so, as you know. To me he seemed quite perfect in that part, and, indeed, I learned that it was his *cheval de bataille*. On making his personal acquaintance I found that he spoke French badly enough, in truth—but he was extremely kind to me, and gave me several acting versions, with Garrick's 'cuts,' amongst them 'Othello' and 'Hamlet.' I returned to Italy, and resigned my engagement at Turin, resolved this time to produce my favourite author on the Italian stage, whatever might come of it. I had saved up a little money, with which I got together a group of young actors as resolute and audacious as myself and, in the spring of 1856, having taken the Teatro Ré at Milan, I billed the walls of the Lombard capital with 'Othello; or, The Moor of Venice, by Mr. William Shakespeare, translated and adapted to the Italian stage by Signor Giulio Carcano.' The rehearsals had gone admirably; everybody was letter-perfect, but, on the opening night, I was every whit as nervous as Modena had been on a similar occasion some years previously. The house was crowded. When the overture had come to an end and the curtain rose, a deadly silence prevailed. I was trembling in every limb. The first scene, however, went quite satisfactorily, and the audience evidently approved of it as perfectly logical and reasonable. The Rubicon was passed, but victory had still to be won. I strung up my nerves and went 'on,' calmly, confidently, and proudly, as befitted my part. My first words

> 'Let him do his spite;
> My services, which I have done the signiory,
> Shall out-tongue his complaints.'

were favourably received; and there was some slight applause after the line

> 'Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them!'

as well as at the conclusion of Othello's address to the Council of Ten, and at his rejoinder to Brabantio's final warning:—

> 'My life upon her faith! . . .'

"The scenes between Othello and Iago (Act iii.),between Desdemona and Othello (Act iv.), and the last of Act v., were greeted with enthusiasm; the plaudits were general and spontaneous. Othello awakened more pity than horror in the breasts of the audience, who quitted the theatre deeply moved by the melancholy

end of Desdemona; but I succeeded also in making them weep over the cruel fate of Othello, whom I presented to them rather as the instrument of inevitable destiny than as a bloodthirsty murderer. Thenceforth, in Italy, Shakespeare was no longer stigmatised as a 'barbarian,' but ranked as a human poet. 'Othello' was repeated night after night through a long run, and with ever-increasing success. Encouraged by its triumphs, I produced 'Hamlet.' The Milanese public, often capricious, sometimes acrimonious, but always intelligent, frankly reversed its former verdict on Shakespeare, and was the first in all Italy to render homage to the British bard who now holds the Italian stage like a giant."

Here I must break off, having already occupied more than the space allotted to me by my friend the Editor of THE THEATRE. But enough has been said to demonstrate beyond dispute or doubt that, in becoming an actor, Ernesto Rossi followed his true and inborn vocation; that his life-long devotion to Shakespeare was the outcome of artistic conviction, not of mere self-sufficiency or greed of gain; and that to him, before all other Italians of the histrionic calling, is attributable the honour and glory of having founded, in his native country, the Shakesperean cult that prevails throughout Italy at the present time, as generally and earnestly as in Germany itself. At some future time I shall crave permission to call my readers' attention to Rossi's fine translation of "Julius Cæsar," recently published at Florence, and to a luminous treatise from his pen, having for its subject the modern drama, and headed "Artist and Authors." And so, for the present, I respectfully take my leave.

Phelps
As I Knew Him.

A RETROSPECT OF REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES, EXTENDING OVER HALF A CENTURY,
RELATED PRINCIPALLY BY HIMSELF, AND PRESERVED

By John Coleman.

Induction.

MR. PHELPS was connected so closely with my earliest theatrical recollections, that when I commenced these reminiscences I had some difficulty in recalling to my mind the exact period when, in my boyhood, I first saw him on the stage. I recall, however, a happy accident, which occurred in the very building with which he was most intimately associated, which reminds me of the precise occasion I desire to remember.

A few years ago, I had been to Drury Lane to see the Meinengen people in "Julius Cæsar."

As I left the theatre I saw, in the vestibule, a tall and stately lady, who had been lovely in her youth, and who, to my thinking—since "Mind is the brightness of the body, lights it when years, its proper but less subtle fire, begins to dim"—has gained an added beauty in her maturity.

I had not see her since the time the Dutch players acted at the Imperial, when she, Toole, and myself formed three units, amidst a select audience of a dozen, in the stalls.

While endeavouring to recall how many years had elapsed since I first played Romeo, Orlando, Claude Melnotte, and Charles Surface with her, she approached and said :

"A charming old theatre, is it not?"

"Especially to me," I replied, "since it was here that I saw my first play in town ; and, would you believe it? that I can recall at

this moment, as clearly as when I heard the line uttered, a beautiful young creature making music, while she murmured :

"'A maid should be an icicle.'"

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed, with the faintest flush of pleasure, "is it possible that you remember that, all these years?"

"Perfectly; it was the first night of a new play by Sheridan Knowles, the last, I believe, he ever wrote. It was called, 'The Secretary,' and you were the heroine."

"If I remember rightly, it was a poor play," she said.

"I thought," I replied, "it was a noble one, for it revealed to me a new world—a world of poetry and beauty."

At this moment I was brought to earth by her husband (why do goddesses descend to husbands of mortal mould, I wonder?), who came to escort her to her carriage.

"The divine Helen," for it was she herself, drove away.

I hailed the first hansom, and, as I bowled along homeward, recalled my first impressions of my dear old friend.

The Meinengens had supplied one link in "Julius Cæsar," the lady had supplied the other, indeed, the first one, in "The Secretary."

According to the well-grounded axiom of the "survival of the fittest," I suppose "The Secretary" must have been a dull play, for it has never been heard of since its first production, except once, when Charles Pitt and Sam Butler acted in it at the Theatre Royal, Manchester.

It was founded on a novel of Grattan's, called "Highways and Byeways." The time is that of William the Third, and refers to some plot against the "little Dutchman's" life. The "little Dutchman" on that occasion was a big one; I am rather inclined to think Ryder was His Batavian Majesty. The company were all big men, except Elton. Macready, was Colonel Green; Anderson, Wilton Brown (the Secretary); Hudson, the Irish comedian, was a young light comedy Lord, whose name I can't remember; George Bennett was the Duke of Gaveston; Elliot Graham, a giant six feet two or three, played some small part or other; Helen Faucit and Mrs. Warner were both in the piece, and Phelps played Lord Byerdale, who was "a villain of the deepest dye." Yes, that was the first time I ever saw him, and an atrocious villain I thought he was. Beyond the "icicle" speech, the villainy of Phelps, and the interest which surrounded Anderson (whom I thought a young Apollo), I remember nothing, save that Macready, who was engaged in the

conspiracy, made some touching appeal to Anderson; that Anderson replied, offering to lie down and die for him, or something of that kind; that Macready dropped into a chair, and, falling forward upon the table with his head on his arms, burst into a mighty passion of tears; and that I began crying too, out of sheer sympathy.

I fear, however, I displayed sad want of taste for a sucking tragedian, inasmuch as I remember far more clearly the after-piece. It was Easter Monday, and it was not only the first night of a new play, but it was also the first night of the first burlesque I ever saw, the famous extravaganza of "Fortunio and his Seven Gifted Servants," written by the ever genial and accomplished J. R. Planché, whom I was destined to know intimately hereafter.

I can remember, as though it were yesterday, when the curtain arose. Hudson (who was an insolvent king), sang a parody on the well-known song, "In the days that we went gipsying," &c., to this effect:

"In the days that we got tipsy in—a long time ago,
We drank champagne from glasses long,
And hock from glasses green,
In the days that we got tipsy in—a long time ago."

I remember, too, Monsieur Jacques, Morris Barnet; he was the impecunious Baron Dunover. Best of all, I remember Priscilla Horton as Fortunio, filling the stage with sunshine whenever she appeared. I can hear her magnificent voice now, as she sang:

"My father dear, oh! rest thee here,
While I do put a light, silk pair of tight
Etceteras on, below.
Oh! if I look but half as well in male attire,
As he I saw the other night upon the wire,
Oh! what an angel I shall be!"

Then came her naughty sister (also disguised as a boy), Mrs. Charles Horn, whom I remember chiefly by her marvellously beautiful legs.

Charles Selby, capital comedian and prolific author, was an Emperor somebody, and the redoubtable Tom Matthews, or W. H. Payne—I am not quite sure which—was one of the gifted servants, endowed with a preternatural "twist," who, to my astonishment, by some occult process, devoured the whole of the bread in the Royal bakery.

Oh! night of golden dreams—of rapture and enchantment, never

to be recalled! From that time to this I have never seen a child at the play for the first time but I have envied him!

A gentleman, who sat next me in the pit seemed interested—perhaps amused—at my unsophisticated admiration of the play and the players. He appeared to know everything and everybody and was very communicative.

As we left the theatre, he asked me which way I was going.

When I replied "To Westbourne Green," he said, "Jump in, young shaver; I'll give you a lift as far as Portman Square."

With the ingenuousness of youth, I confided to him my name and calling, and then modestly inquired his name and occupation.

"Oh, I'm a gardener," he said, "and my name is Joseph Paxton."

When next I heard that name there was a handle to it. Joseph had become Sir Joseph at or about the year of the first great exhibition.

The same year I saw Mr. Phelps at "Her Majesty's Own Royal Victoria Theatre."

The occasion was an exceptional one; it was for the benefit of George Bennett, the tragedian, known so long afterwards at Sadler's Wells, under the Phelps and Greenwood *régime*.

The play was "Julius Cæsar." Vandenhoff was Brutus; Phelps, Cassius; Sheridan Knowles, Mark Antony; Cæsar, George Bennett; and Portia, Mrs. W. West, a slender, delicate, fair-haired creature, whose portrait is still to be found in Cumberland's Edition as the other Portia in "The Merchant of Venice."

This lady has long "moved over to the majority," but on the morning of the recent Chatterton Benefit at Drury Lane, a few months ago, I saw her husband, a hale, hearty old gentleman of ninety, who told me that he walked twelve miles a day, and beguiled his leisure by compiling a history of the drama, commencing his labours at a period of 500 years before the Christian Era!

The same day, the youthful William Woolgar (Miss Mellon's father), ætat. eighty-four, airily informed me he was actively engaged in preparing his reminiscences for publication.

Truly actors are a long-lived race.

"The mightiest Julius" was acted by John Dale, the unfortunate tragedian, who débuted at Covent Garden as Virginius, under Osbaldiston's management, and who opened and shut the same night. The poor fellow made an enormous hit up to the fourth act. In the next, while engaged in the strangulation of

Appius Claudius, one half of Virginius' beard came off, leaving his face bearded on one side and bare on the other. From that moment poor Dale's fate was sealed, and the tragedy ended amidst a chorus of howling.

To return, however, to the play. Phelps had very much the best of it in the acting; his rugged, fiery, and impetuous mode of attack carried everything before it.

Vandenhoff was stately and turgid, while, as for Sheridan Knowles, he had a brogue as thick as butter. The oration over the body of Cæsar was delicious. The opening lines he introduced after this fashion :—

> "Frinds, Romans, counthrymin, lind me your ears,
> I come to bury Caysar, not to praise 'em!"

I must not, however, forget Popilius Lena, enacted by a certain popular pantomimist, who, like the late lamented Herr Von Joel, was, "in consideration of former services, always retained on the establishment."

For "napping the slap," sliding on butter, stealing sausages, or handling a red-hot poker "Joey" was still a second Grimaldi, but his accomplishments stopped short at the Shakespearean drama.

The cast of "Julius Cæsar" is a very heavy one, and the unfortunate clown was pressed into it for this Popilius Lena, who has only two lines to say in the murder scene of the third act. The poor little man, who was almost as broad as he was long, was "made up" as an ancient Roman, with a scratch wig, which he had borrowed for the purpose from the comedian of the company. The crowded house, the unaccustomed costume, the novelty of the position, and, above all, the name of Shakespere, disconcerted the poor pantomimist.

As he stood at the wings trembling, Knowles came up, and accosted him cheerily with—

"What's the matther, Joey, my boy? What's the matther?"

"Oh! it's this blessed Shikespere of your'n, Misster Knowles; he is giving me fits. If it was 'Hot Codlins,' now, or 'Tippyti-witchet,' or a broadsword combat, or a hornpipe, I should be all there, but I never could slang Shikspere!"

"Don't be afraid, my boy, don't be afraid; it's only a couple of lines, you know."

"I know that, Muster Knowles, but they're such plaguey hard lines! I wish your henterprise may prosper! As it is, I don't know

whether I'm on my head or my heels now, but when I gits on the stage among all them six-foot tragedy Jacks—Oh! Jerusalem! Wot's the 'henterprise,' anyhow?"

"Why, they are going to kill Caysar, and you wish them through with it."

"What! kill John Dale?"

"Exactly."

"Oh! that's their little game, is it? I wish they'd kill him right out; he's always sittin' on me with his beastly tragedies! Then, what's 'Fare-you-well'?"

"Oh! it means good-bye, that's all!"

"Then why the blazes don't he say so?"

At this moment the prompter cut in with:

"Stage waiting, Joey: on you go!"

The wretched clown, in an agony of stage-fright, gasped:

"Oh, Lord! what am I to do? What am I to say?"

"Oh, say anything, only get on!" replied the prompter, shoving him on the stage.

Just as the unfortunate pantomimist reached the centre he caught his foot in his toga, and down he went on his nose. When he got up Phelps, Vandenhoff, and Bennett, glared at him savagely. The laughter subsided, and a solemn silence ensued, amidst which the noble Popilius looked round to see that no one was listening, then, beckoning the conspirators around him, and putting his finger to the side of his nose, he said, confidentially:

"I vish yer luck!"

The yell which arose on all sides at this ingenuous expression of sympathy, and the portentous grimaces of the enraged tragedians, perfectly paralysed the poor little man, who looked hopelessly round for a moment, and tottered towards the wing; but ere he could make his exit a wag from the gallery called out:

"Never mind Shikspere, Joey; give us 'Hot Codlins!'"

This was the most striking effect of the night; even the tragedians yielded to the general infection, and laughed as poor Joey bolted, exclaiming:

"Oh, b—— Shikspere! I wish he'd never been born!"

After a time, however, this unfortunate breakdown was got over, and the remainder of the performance was received with interest, if not with enthusiasm.

At the end of the play there was a call for Phelps, whereupon

Vandenhoff presented himself, and some ruffian in the pit, attired as a butcher, roared out :

"Put your head in a bag ; we don't want you, old stick-in-the-mud—it's Phelps we wants !"

Whereupon Vandenhoff retired, glaring at his insulter with classic disdain.

When Phelps appeared in modern attire the audience didn't know him, nor did I. He had made up for Cassius with a dark beard and a bald wig, in which he looked a man of fifty-five ; when he came before the curtain, he didn't seem more than thirty.

After this there was a call for Knowles, who evidently had been to the Victoria before. Presently he came on, dressed in a vivid green Newmarket coat, with huge brass buttons and accompaniments in the shape of tightly-strapped trousers of Scotch plaid, a costume which displayed most prominently a figure the salient points of which resembled the body of a blue-bottle fly, and the legs of a spider.

"My Bhoys," said the poet—"I mane, Ladies and Gintlemen, —I'm glad to be amongst my owld friends, the Victorians, onst more. By my honour, you're the finest augience I ever acted to in the whole course of my life ! God bless you, my children !"

I wonder whether young playgoers are as ardent in the pursuit of the play as I was in those days ? I walked all the way from Westbourne Green to the New Cut and all the way back, to see my Shakespere that night.

The next time I saw Mr. Phelps was upon another Easter Monday.

That night the memorable Phelps and Greenwood management commenced with "Macbeth," and that morning two boys waited upon the tragedian at the stage-door of Sadlers' Wells, beseeching an engagement to bring them on the stage.

One of the boys was the late Charles Calvert, the other was myself.

Phelps appeared, at that time, a fair young man of thirty, though I believe he was considerably older. He had a profusion of light brown hair, worn after the fashion of Macready, in huge bunches (yclept by the irreverent "Newgate knockers") over his ears. His eyes, at all times a serious drawback to his facial expression, were so pale as to be almost colourless, and were certainly almost indistinguishable on the stage. His nose, like Macready's, was of a strange composite order, the mouth and chin firm and well-cut, brow

square, and well balanced, face oval, figure a little over middle height, slender rather than sturdy, voice deep and resonant. Whether by accident or design I cannot say, but he certainly was always tinged with the Macready manner.

He was very gracious to us, and advised us both to go back to school. I don't know whether Calvert followed his advice: I only know I did not.

When next I saw Phelps it was at the farewell banquet given to Macready, at the Hall of Commerce, in Threadneedle Street, when Edward Lytton Bulwer presided, and nearly every eminent man in the world of art and letters was present.

Thanks to the especial courtesy of Charles Dickens, I was myself enabled to be there.

Phelps was to have returned thanks for the drama, but at the last moment, he "funked, turned tail, and bolted!"

After that time, I saw him in everything he did at the Wells, except "Love's Labour Lost" and "Pericles," the last of which he told me was his greatest success. We had frequently been in communication with each other; indeed, he had repeatedly offered me engagements to act at Sadlers Wells, but my star was then in the ascendant in the great provincial towns, and I could make as much money in a night in the country as he offered me for a week in London; hence it happened that I never had the good fortune to serve under his banner.

He was always a home-bird—too much so, for he rarely or ever went into society. It was easy to see the weight of Mrs. Phelps' influence over him—he was guided by her every wish, her every whim. After they were settled in town, and once had a place they could call a home, she was never separated from him a single day. She accompanied him to the theatre nightly, and never suffered anyone to assist in dressing him except herself.

Although there was no lack of filial reverence, all the family seemed to regard him as the spoiled child of the house. At home nearly every trace of the tragedian disappeared. Although naturally petulent and irascible at his own fireside he was a jovial, genial, boon companion, never weary of recounting his youthful struggles and misadventures.

The family, when I first became acquainted with it, consisted of three sons and three daughters. The eldest son was a barrister, and had just received a Government appointment at

Sierra Leone, for which he was about to set sail in a few days. Alas! poor fellow, he never returned.

Our business relations commenced during my management of the York Circuit, when he came to fulfil a series of engagements.

Upon these occasions he was invariably my guest, and one summer he went over with his daughters, the late Mr. Tom Taylor and myself to the Isle of Man, where he made a holiday with us for some three months.

It was principally during this period, and during my frequent visits to Camden Road, to which he removed on the death of Mrs. Phelps, that he related the various reminiscences hereafter recorded.

On the subject of his early life Mr. Phelps was reticent, merely stating that he was born in 1804, at Devonport, near Plymouth, and that his brother was, and is, I believe, Master of a College at Cambridge. As a boy "Sam" was a member of an amateur corps at Devonport. *Apropos* of which, during the time he was with me at the Queen's, one morning, when he came to my room to speak with me on some subject, a crusty old man from the theatrical drapers was waiting for orders.

When Phelps left the room the old fellow growled, "Humph! you don't know me now, Mr. Sam; of course not—'tain't likely; but fifty years ago we was brother hamatoors, we was, and acted together at Plymouth Dock, and now you are the great tragedian, and me in the alarming sacrifice business. For all that, I've acted Mercootio to your Romeo, and very well I done it too. Ah! it's a rum world."

Phelps must have come to London very early, inasmuch as he was a fellow apprentice with Douglas Jerrold to a printer. Both the lads were of an aspiring turn of mind—both wanted to be actors, both took lessons out of their work hours, in Latin, and mathematics, from a clever but eccentric old Dutchman. When they had served their time, each went in different directions—the one to become a great author, the other to become a great actor.

Phelps debuted as an amateur in one of the private theatres, as Earl Osmond, in Monk Lewis's wild and extravagant drama of "The Castle Spectre." It may appear strange that the future apostle of the legitimate should have selected this "high-falutin," double-breasted, old crusted specimen of "force shall effect what love denies" ruffian for his opening, especially when it is remembered that John Kemble, when the play was originally produced by

Sheridan, declined the part, and elected to play, out of compliment, it is said, to the house of Northumberland, the milksop Percy, instead.

Phelps told me that he was married at a very early age, and he always described his marriage as an unmixed blessing.

Somehow or other, he got launched in the country as an actor of utility, to to do high, low, Jack, and the game, or anything the managers thought proper to entrust him with.

When fulfilling an engagement with me in York, at the zenith of his fortunes, to his great delight some old playgoer sent him a playbill, dated Easter Monday, 1828, and recording his first appearance in the city, under the management of Mr. Sam Butler, a famous tragedian in his time.

Phelps's opening part on that occasion was the Sentinel in "Pizarro, and his next Captain Crosstree, in "Black-eyed Susan."

On the occasion of the present visit we opened with "Othello;" he was the Moor, and I played Iago.

He had never been in York since his first-born saw the light there.

Tired as he was, and dangerous as it was for him to go out in the cold night air, after so arduous a task—for he was then getting on for seventy—when the play was over, he insisted on taking me round to Stonegate, where he pointed out in the moonlight the room in which his eldest son was born.

"Ah!" said he, "many a time have I seen *her* standing there, looking down upon me when I came in in the morning, and when I went away at night. That was nearly half a century ago! The season was over here, and we had to go to Leeds. I was obliged to leave her behind me, because she was near her time; double lodgings were going on, so it wouldn't run to coaching; I used, therefore, to start on 'Shanks's mare,' over Leeds bridge every Saturday night as soon as the play was over, and get to York as the Minster bells were calling to church on Sunday morning, and as regularly as they tolled twelve on Sunday night, I started off and walked back to Leeds, arriving just in time for Monday morning's rehearsal.

"Yet, amidst it all, how happy we were, we two, boy and girl together!

"I can see her now, in her plain white muslin dress, her great eyes shining like stars, her face lighted up like sunshine. Every night when I went away she used to stand there in the window yonder, and look at me to the last!

"Ah! I was much happier then at five-and-twenty 'bob' a week, with her to share it, than I am now, when I get half the house every night!"

With that he hurried home as if in a dream.

If it be true that "the most perfect herald of joy is silence," then he must have been happy.

When we got to the Theatre House I could not induce him to taste bit, bite or sup.

He sat and smoked his cigar, and said never a word.

Evidently he had lost himself in the past.

Visions of life's morning, of the time, "when Love shook the dewdrops from her glancing hair" had come back to the old man.

The loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead were around him and about him; as with a strange light in his eye, and a strange tremor in his voice, he bade us "Good-Night."

As these reminiscences would lose half their charm by being narrated in the third person, in the majority of instances I shall let Mr. Phelps speak for himself, always premising that I am absolutely dependent on my memory, and cannot be responsible for dates.

Regnier.

By Charles Hervey.

SINCE the death of this eminent and deservedly popular comedian (April 27, 1885), his artistic career has been so fully and minutely recorded by the Parisian press that there remains but little to be said of him, either as actor or dramatic professor. In remembrance, however, of a friendship which lasted uninterruptedly between us for many years, I may be allowed to add a few personal recollections—small and insignificant as they may appear—to the general stock.

I first met Regnier in 1844—a long time to look back upon—at which period I was engaged in collecting materials for a book on the theatres of Paris as they were then, and was indebted to him for much valuable information which no one was better qualified to supply. He not only placed at my disposal his manuscript notes for a succinct history of the French stage, partly published in that excellent work "Patria," but introduced me to the *foyer* of the Comédie Française, and secured for me a kindly welcome from his fellow *sociétaires*, not one of whom, I believe, has survived him. He was then, if not at the height of his reputation, at least progressing rapidly towards it; he had already proved himself an unrivalled Scapin and Figaro, and in the modern repertory had largely contributed to the success of "Une Châine," "Les Demoiselles de St. Cyr," and "Le Mari à la Campagne." Three of his greatest triumphs—Annibal in "L'Aventurière," Julien in "Gabrielle," and Noël in "La Joie Fait Peur"—were yet to come; but he had accomplished enough to entitle him to an exceptional position as one of the most brilliantly versatile actors and popular favourites of his day. Gifted with a rare intelligence and an unerring tact, he succeeded by incessant efforts in combating and overcoming the natural defects of a harsh and unsympathetic voice and an inexpressive physiognomy. His gaiety was so communicative, and his exuberance of animal spirits so contagious, that

whatever character he undertook became, in the opinion of nine-tenths of those present, the principal feature of the piece.

During the forty-one years of his stay at the Théâtre Français he appeared in no less than two hundred and fifty different parts, embracing every variety of type, and alternating "from grave to gay, from lively to severe." Many of these would assuredly have been considered below the dignity of a *premier sujet*, and contemptuously handed over by a less conscientious *sociétaire* to one or other of his subordinates; but with Regnier a perfect "*ensemble*" was a *sine quâ non*, and, provided that he could ensure this to his satisfaction, the part that fell to his share, whether important or not, was a matter of complete indifference to him; and I remember a case in point. On the occasion of Firmin's farewell benefit in 1845, the "Misanthrope," one of the retiring actor's best personations occupied the place of honour in the bills, and the cast having been finally settled so as to include most of the leading members of the company, Regnier alone excepted, the latter declared that, sooner than be left out altogether, he would play the valet Dubois.

"Dubois!" exclaimed Mdlle. Denain, the Célimène of the evening "you surely can't be serious; he has only one scene."

"Besides," suggested the *raisonneur* Mainvielle, "it is Mathien's part."

"Mathien* will give it up to me for once," quietly responded Regnier, "and I think I can make something of it."

As those acquainted with Molière's masterpiece are aware, the single scene in which Dubois figures offers little opportunity for effect, his mission being simply to announce to Alceste the arrival of a letter which he has forgotten to bring him, and at length remembers that he has left it at home. The substitution, however, of Regnier for the usual representative of the personage proved so attractive a novelty that his appearance was eagerly awaited by the audience; and on his entrance, attired in the traditional green and gold stage livery, with a three-cornered hat and enormous jack boots, he was greeted almost as enthusiastically as the *bénéficiaire* himself. Every word he uttered was the signal for a roar of laughter; his dazed and bewildered air when impatiently

* A very useful actor of the Théâtre Français in parts averaging from two to twenty lines. Like the biographer of Dickens, who complained that the people would persist in spelling his name "Foster," Mathien could never divest himself of the humiliating idea that the public invariably spoke of him as "Mathieu."

questioned by Alceste, and, above all, his comical display of disappointment when searching in vain for the missing epistle, first in each of his pockets, and, as a last resource, in his boots, were so irresistibly droll that the spectators screamed with delight, and even Firmin could hardly succeed in maintaining a semblance of gravity.

Regnier had no faith in improvised effects, but insisted that on the production of a new piece the smallest details should be carefully arranged beforehand, and nothing left to chance. During the rehearsals of Madame de Girardin's "La Joie Fait Peur," the scene between him and Delaunay, where the latter, supposed to be dead, unexpectedly reappears, had been methodically regulated after the following fashion. While the old servant Noël (Regnier) is engaged in his daily task of dusting and putting in order the family sitting-room, his thoughts involuntarily recall to him his missing young master. "I see him now," he says, "the poor lad, returning from one of his excursions tired and half famished, and calling out, 'Here I am, my good Noël, dying with hunger; quick, give me an omelette!'" At this moment Adrien (Delaunay) appears at the door, and, overhearing the soliloquy, gaily repeats the same words; and Noël, overcome by the sudden shock, turns round, and, recognising the new comer, falls insensible into his arms.

In order to heighten the effect, it had been agreed that Delaunay should pause between each phrase, so as to give Regnier time to express pantomimically the sensations successively experienced by him, and even the number of seconds allotted to every separate pause had been exactly calculated; Adrien's cue being to wait until he had said "Quick, give me an omelette" before holding out his arms to receive the fainting Noël. However, notwithstanding all these precautions, when the first night of performance arrived, either from nervous excitement or lapse of memory, Regnier entirely forgot the preconcerted plan, and on hearing the words "Here I am," turned suddenly round, and sank helplessly on the neck of his astonished and unprepared colleague, a movement so natural and spontaneous that the whole house rang with applause.

After the fall of the curtain, Delaunay suggested that, as the unrehearsed effect had been so successful, they might as well try it again.

"No, no," said Regnier, "the old way is the safest; the longer the public is kept in suspense the more they like it. I shall not forget myself another time."

Nor did he.

He once told me that his earliest experiences of the stage, far from giving him confidence in his own powers, had greatly discouraged him; and that the turning-point in his career dated from his engagement in 1826 at Metz, where he became a favourite, and produced at the local theatre a little comedy, entitled "Une Méprise." "In 1831," he said, "the opening of the Palais Royal introduced me to a Parisian audience, and I remained there four months, when, finding myself completely out of my element, I requested Dormeuil to cancel my engagement, which he only consented to do on the express condition that I should apply for the necessary permission to make my *début* at the Comédie Française. I appeared there in November of that year as Figaro in 'La Folle Journée,' and on the following evening played the same character in the 'Barbier de Seville.' Four years later I became *sociétaire*, and what has happened since you know as well as I do."

In the spring of 1845 he came to London with Mdlle. Plessy, and treated the frequenters of the St. James's to a round of his most popular characters, making an especial hit as Colombet in "Le Mari à la Campagne." An extract from one of the letters written during his stay may be inserted here. "Thanks to the hints you gave me, I have been able to visit your theatres with some knowledge of the actors. I have seen Farren in two pieces, and need hardly say that I was delighted; the entire Haymarket company, indeed, appeared to me excellent. Mr. Wallack of the Princess's Theatre is an artist of unquestionable merit, and Mr. Webster, with whom I passed a pleasant evening at the house of his colleague Farren, charmed me beyond expression by his unaffectedly courteous manner and agreeable conversation. As for Mrs. Glover, with all my admiration for our own excellent Madame Desmousseaux, I must confess that in my opinion the *doyenne* of your stage is very far her superior."

In 1854, Regnier was appointed professor of declamation at the Conservatoire; and eighteen years later, April 10, 1872, finally retired from the stage. At a banquet specially organised by his fellow *sociétaires*, the manager, M. Perrin, presented him with a gold medal, one side of which bore his name, while on the other were inscribed the dates of his first and last appearance at the Comédie Française, a distinction never before conferred on an artist of the "house of Molière;" and in the following August he received the

cross of the Legion of Honour. From that period until his death —with the exception of a short engagement as stage-director of the Théâtre Français, which he only held for a few months—he devoted himself entirely to his duties as professor, the best of his many promising pupils being unquestionably the elder Coquelin. In this capacity he became, if possible, more popular than he had been as an actor, and secured an undisputed monopoly as the only recognised instructor of theatrical aspirants. A word of encouragement from "Monsieur" Regnier was regarded as a sure passport to future celebrity, and admission to his class considered an infallible stepping-stone to fortune. From the stage-struck apprentice to Mdlle. Galochard, the would-be Célimène of a porter's *loge*, varying the monotony of her existence by the diligent study of a well-thumbed *brochure* from the emporium of M. Calmann Lévy, all were actuated by the same ambition, namely, that of obtaining by hook or by crook an introduction to "the" professor; after which, as a matter of course, the rest would be plain sailing.

Nor were the labours of this indefatigable teacher confined to the Conservatoire; private theatricals have always been the fashion in Paris, and in order to guarantee the success of a *proverbe*, interpreted by some enterprising hostess and her friends, his co-operation was looked upon as indispensable. As a means of attracting people to these drawing-room exhibitions, some ladies did not even scruple to make an unauthorised use of his name, and delude their guests into the belief that the announced performance had been personally superintended by him. For instance, if you happened to meet Madame de————, one of the most untiring promoters of this species of entertainment (?), she would confidentially allude to a certain forthcoming *soirée* at which your presence was counted upon, the bait held out being either an original operetta or other dramatic novelty, in which M. le Comte and Madame la Marquise were to sustain the principal characters; and if, as might very well be the case, you ventured to express a mild disbelief in amateur histrionics, she would blandly insinuate that if you only knew who had kindly volunteered to act as stage manager your doubts as to the success of the piece would immediately be dispelled. "I don't mind telling you," she would add with her most persuasive smile, "but please let it go no further, for he doesn't wish it to be generally known; it is Monsieur Regnier!"

In addition to the little comedy already mentioned as having

been brought out at Metz, the subject of our notice produced, in collaboration with Paul Foucher, "La Joconde," written expressly for the Théâtre Français, and "Delphine Gerbet," played at the Vaudeville in 1862; neither of them had more than a moderate share of success. Besides these, he contributed largely to the adaptation of "Mdlle. de la Seiglière," to the "Demoiselles de St. Cyr," and to Octave Feuillet's "Péril en la Demeure"; he is also stated on good authority to have ensured the triumph of "La Joie Fait Peur," by judiciously curtailing it from three acts into one.

In private life, Regnier, or, more correctly, François Joseph Philoclés Regnier de la Brière, was universally and deservedly popular, his kindly disposition and pleasant social qualities endearing him to a large circle of friends, among whom it is almost unnecessary to cite his sincere admirers, Dickens, Forster, and Macready. He married a daughter of the clever painter Grevedon, and had three children, a son and two daughters, the elder of whom, a pretty and engaging girl, died in August, 1849, in her fourteenth year. At one period he was an industrious collector of books and other curiosities relating to the stage, and the modest apartment occupied by him for many years in the Rue Ventadour, close to the Italian Opera, was stored with them; latterly, however, in consequence of the increasing demands on his time by professional engagements, he abandoned the pursuit with regret, and in the very last letter I received from him deplored his inability to cultivate so agreeable a resource, adding, with a touch of his old humour, that he must in future content himself with collecting—much against the grain—"grey hairs and wrinkles."

The Author of "Home, Sweet Home."

By W. C. Miller.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE, the author of "Home, Sweet Home," and a playwright of some celebrity in his day, was born in New York on April 9, 1791. He was the son of William Payne, a schoolmaster, who enjoyed the reputation of being the best teacher of elocution in that city.

Payne had thus opportunities afforded him of acquiring the art of speaking in public with propriety and effect, which he turned to good account. At the school exhibitions, scenes from plays were occasionally given. In these, the boy had the leading part assigned him, owing to the precocious talent he displayed in acting, as well as in declamation; but his father was averse to any member of his family adopting the stage as a profession. Payne, therefore, at the age of fourteen, was placed in the counting-house of a firm in which an elder brother was partner.

The lad did not take kindly to mercantile life. He abandoned it, and entered college to complete his education; but he remained there little more than a year, owing to the fact of his father having fallen in pecuniary difficulties, which rendered it necessary for the youth to push his fortunes in the world unaided.

Just at this time, the fame of Master Betty, the young Roscius, reached the United States. This exercised a powerful influence upon Payne's mind, and he became emulous of achieving an equal celebrity in America. He therefore directed his attention to studying for the stage. He likewise sought every opportunity that offered itself of playing in private theatricals. On one occasion a prominent member of the Boston Theatre Company happened to be present at an amateur performance in which Payne took part, and this gentleman was so struck with the lad's histrionic talents that he gave him an introduction to the manager of the Park Theatre in New York. The result was that Payne obtained an en-

gagement at that house, and on February 24, 1807, he made his first public appearance as Young Norval, in the tragedy of "Douglas." The *début* was a complete success, and Payne played the part for several consecutive nights.

From New York Payne went to Boston, where he appeared as Young Norval, and subsequently as Romeo and as Rolla. On the close of his engagement in Boston, he visited Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, drawing crowded houses in each of these cities. On his return from his tour in the South, Payne, for a few years, pursued his profession in New York, occupying his intervals of leisure in writing for the press.

When two-and-twenty, Payne conceived the project of trying his fortunes on the English stage; and on the 17th of January, 1813, he sailed for Liverpool. At that time the United States and Great Britain were at war, and, although the packet-ship had a *cartel* when she arrived in port, Payne and his fellow-passengers were imprisoned. They were all, however, at the expiration of some days, released.

Payne then made his way to London, having been, while in Liverpool, furnished by William Roscoe with letters of introduction to John Kemble, Coleridge, Campbell, Southey, Lord Byron, and others. Through the influence brought to bear by some of these eminent men upon the management of Drury Lane, he, after considerable delay, obtained an engagement at that theatre, and he made his first appearance upon the London stage as Young Norval on the 14th of June, 1813. His reception was a very favourable one, the death scene, in particular, being considered finely played. Payne performed in the metropolis for a month; he then made a round of the principal provincial theatres. After this, he proceeded to Dublin, where, in conjunction with Miss O'Neil, he played in various tragedies.

Returning to London, after a brief absence, Payne found that, being no longer a novelty, his acting did not command the same measure of success as formerly. He therefore left the stage and visited Paris, in which city he was resident during the "Hundred Days."

It was at this period that Payne commenced his career as a dramatic author. His first attempt in this line was a translation of a French melodrama, under the title of "The Maid and the Magpie" It was brought out at Covent Garden, and drew good

houses. Payne then wrote a tragedy, "Brutus," which was successful; this, however, was chiefly due to the magnificent acting of Edmund Kean, for the piece had very little literary merit. Payne next translated a French drama, "La Famille d'Anglade," to which he gave the name of "The Accusation." It was accepted by the management of Drury Lane, and had a fair run. Other plays —original or translations—followed in rapid succession from Payne's prolific pen. Indeed, his contributions to dramatic literature during the nineteen years he spent in Europe amount to upwards of fifty. These productions, almost without exception, have sunk into oblivion. One, however, a clever little two-act comedy, "Charles II.," still keeps possession of the stage.

During Payne's residence in London he had become acquainted with Charles Lamb, who kept up a correspondence with him for some years. The two characteristic letters given here—so far as I am aware—have never been hitherto published in this country. They were indited by Lamb in reference to a couple of melodramas, entitled respectively "Ali Pacha" and "The Two Galley Slaves," written by Payne. They are as follows :—

1822, Thursday.

"Ali Pacha" will do. I sent my sister the first night, not having been able to go myself, and her report of its effect was most favourable. I saw it last night—the third night—and it was most satisfactorily received. I have been sadly disappointed in Talfourd, who does the critiques in the *Times*, and who promised his strenuous services; but, by some damn'd arrangement e was sent to the wrong house, and a most iniquitous account of Ali substituted for his, which, I am sure, would have been a kind one. The *Morning Herald* did it ample justice, without appearing to puff it. It is an abominable misrepresentation of the *Times* that Farren played Ali like Lord Ogilby. He acted infirmity of body, but not of voice or purpose. His manner was even grand. A grand old gentleman. His falling to the earth when his son's death was announced was as fine as anything I ever saw. It was as if he had been blasted. Miss Foote looked helpless and beautiful, and greatly helped the piece. It is going *on steadily*, I am sure, *for many nights*. Marry! I was a little disappointed with Hassan, who tells us he subsists by cracking court jests before Ali, but he made none. In all the rest, scenery and machinery, it was faultless. I hope it will bring you here. I should be most glad of that. I have a room for you, and you shall order your own dinner three days in the week. I must retain my own authority for the rest. As far as magazines go, I can answer for Talford in the *New Monthly*. He cannot be put out there. But it is established as a favourite, and can do without these expletives. I long to talk over with you the Shakespeare Picture. My doubts of its being a forgery mainly rest upon the goodness of the picture. The bellows might be trumped up, but where did the painter spring from? Is Ireland a consummate artist, or any of Ireland's accomplices? But we shall confer upon it, I hope. The *New Times*, I understand, was favourable to Ali, but I have not seen it. I am sensible of the want of method in this letter, but I have been deprived of the connecting organ by a practice I have fallen into since I left Paris of taking too much strong spirits of a night. I must return to the Hotel de l'Europe, and Macow.

How is Kenny? Have you seen my friend White? What is Poole about? &c. Do not write, but come and answer me.

The weather is charming, and there is a mermaid to be seen in London. You may not have the opportunity of inspecting such a *Poisarde* once again in ten centuries.

My sister joins me in the hope of seeing you.

Yours Truly,

C. Lamb.

Wednesday, 13th Nov., 1822.

Dear P.—Owing to the inconvenience of having two lodgings, I did not get your letter so soon as I should. The India House is my proper address, where I am sure for the fore part of the day. The instant I got it I addressed a letter for Kemble to see my friend Henry Robertson, the treasurer of Covent Garden Theatre. He had a conference with Kemble, and the result is that Robertson, in the name of the management, recognised to me the full ratifying of your bargain: £250 for "Ali" and the "Slaves," and another piece which they had not received. He assures me the whole will be paid you, on the proportion or the two former, as soon as ever the treasury will permit it. He offered to write the same to you, if I pleased. He thinks in a month or so they will be able to liquidate it. He is positive no trick could be meant you, as Mr. Planche's alterations, which were trifling, were not at all considered as affecting your bargain. With respect to "Ali," he was of opinion no money would be given for the copyright of it, as "Ali" is quite laid aside. This explanation being given, you would not think of printing the two copies by way of recrimination. He told me the secret of "The Two Galley Slaves" at Drury Lane. Elliston, if he is informed right, engaged Poole to translate, but before Poole's translation arrived, finding it coming out at Covent Garden, he procured copies of two several translations of it in London. So you see here are four translations, reckoning yours. I fear no copyright would be got for it, for anybody may print it, and anybody has. Yours has run seven nights, and R. is of opinion it will not exceed in number of nights the nights of "Ali"—about thirteen. But your full right to your bargain with the management is in the fullest manner recognised by him officially. He gave me every hope the money will be paid as soon as they can spare it. He said *a month or two*, but he seemed to me he meant about a *month*. This is a mere business letter, so I will just send my love to my dear little wife at Versailles, to her dear mother, &c.

Believe me yours truly,

C. L.

It will be observed that in one paragraph of the first of the above letters Lamb speaks of his having fallen into the habit "of taking too much strong spirits." This unfortunate failing he did not succeed in overcoming. But, "gin-soaked" as Carlyle coarsely says poor Lamb became in his later years, it may be well doubted if the "Sage of Chelsea" possessed so kind a heart, or was so ready to exert himself on behalf of a friend, as the man he reviles.

But to return to Payne. It was at this time that he wrote "Home, Sweet Home." This beautiful and pathetic ballad was composed by him one dull October day, when living in humble lodgings in Paris, near the Palais Royal. The depressing influence of his surroundings, something in the very atmosphere, seemed to harmonise with his feelings of melancholy as he contemplated his solitary lot in life. These were instrumental in bringing forth the pathos and tender yearnings for home which characterise the ballad. As originally composed, it ran as follows :—

"Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to carry us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home, there's no place like home.

An exile from home, splendour dazzles in vain;
Oh! give me my lowly thatched cottage again
The birds sing gaily, that come at my call,
Give me them with the peace of mind, dearer than all,
Home! home! etc.

How sweet, too, to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile.
Let others delight 'mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me the pleasures of home.
Home! home! etc.

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;
The heart's dearest face will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam.
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home! home! etc.

The song was subsequently rewritten by Payne, and introduced into a play called "Clari, the Maid of Milan," which was sold by him, in 1823, to Charles Kemble, of Covent Garden Theatre, for £250. The piece was turned into an opera by the management, the music being composed by Henry Bishop. In, the opera the song was in the form we now know it. The new version ran thus :—

Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere,
Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home, there's no place like home.

An exile from home, splendour dazzles in vain;
Oh! give me that lowly thatched cottage again;
The birds, singing gaily, that come at my call,
Give me them—and the peace of mind dearer than all;
Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home, there's no place like home.

"Clari" had a long run, the chief *rôle* being taken by Miss Maria Tree, whose singing of this simple ballad created a great sensation, gifted as she was not only with a beautiful and expressive face, but with a fine voice, which thrilled her hearers. More than one hundred thousand copies of the song, as set to music, were sold within a year of its publication. But, owing to the then existing state of the law of copyright, poor Payne reaped no pecuniary

advantage from this source, nor did even his name appear as the author.

In the summer of 1832, Payne, after an absence of twenty years, returned to the United States nearly as poor as when he left it. However, a complimentary benefit was given to him in the Park Theatre, in New York, which had the result of putting some money in his purse. For the following ten years he supported himself by writing for the press, until, in 1842, he was appointed American Consul at Tunis. But this post he only held three years. Following the practice first introduced by General Jackson, who cynically declared that "For the victors belong the spoils," Mr. Polk, who had succeeded Mr. Filmore as President, dismissed almost every individual in the service of the Federal Government who had been appointed to office by his predecessor. Payne was not one of the few officials spared, and, having lost his consulate, he returned to America, where he resumed his former avocation as a contributor to various journals.

But the exertions of several prominent citizens of Washington, who knew Payne's private worth, and the claims he had upon his countrymen—as the only dramatist of any note whom America had, up to that time, produced—made strenuous efforts to get him reappointed Consul at Tunis. In these they were finally successful.

In May, 1851, Payne left the United States to enter upon the duties of his office. This post, however, he did not fill long, his death taking place on the 9th of April, 1852, less than a year after his arrival at Tunis. He was buried in the cemetery of St. George in that city.

After Payne had lain in a foreign grave upwards of thirty years, his countrymen came to the tardy resolve to have his remains removed to his native land. To Mr. W. Corcoran, a well-known philanthropic citizen of Washington, is due the initiation of the project and the credit of defraying all the expenses incidental to carrying it into execution. The necessary permission of the Secretary of State having been obtained, Payne's ashes were brought to the United States, and on June 9, 1883, they found a resting-place in Oak Cemetery, Washington. At the same time a handsome monument, the cost of which was borne by public subscription, was raised to the memory of the author of "Home, Sweet Home."

Our Play-Box.

"HUMAN NATURE"

A new and original drama in five acts and fourteen scenes, by Henry Pettit and Augustus Harris, produced at Drury Lane Theatre on Saturday, Sept. 12, 1885.

Captain Temple	Mr. Henry Neville	Jim Buxton	Mr. Reuben Inch
Matthew Hawker	Mr. Edmund Leathes	Father Bonini	Mr. Wm. Morgan
Paul de Vigne	Mr. J. G. Grahame	Frank	Miss Maud E. Fisher
Stephen Mardyke	Mr. J. H. Clynds	Dick	Miss Katie Barry
Rev. Arthur Lulworth ...	Mr. R. C Lyons	Nellie Temple	Miss Isabel Bateman
Horatio Spofkins	Mr. Harry Nicholls	Cora Grey	Miss Emmeline Ormsby
Joe Lambkin	Mr. Fred Thorne	Maggie Wilkins	Miss Marie Illington
John Stone...	Mr. Henry Elmore	Mrs. Lambkin	Miss Lizzie Claremont
Colonel Brandon	Mr. Arthur Yates	Mrs. Lulworth	Miss Amy McNeill
Pat O'Connor	Mr. George Huntley	Luey...	Miss Selina Delphine
Lilliger	Mr. H. J. Turner.	Mrs. Buxton	Miss Minnie Inch

Captain Temple and his wife are ostensibly a very happy couple. They are model married folk, and are naturally fond of their only son, a pretty little fellow of a very talkative and interesting age. Now, Captain Temple, being on active service in the army, is much away from home. He is told off to climates which would injuriously affect his delicate wife, who during his enforced absence amuses herself, or allows herself to be amused, by the attentions of an intimate friend of her husband, one Paul de Vigne. Far be it from us to say that there is any harm on Mrs. Temple's part in this innocent attachment. Women always have an answer ready when any such suggestion is made. It is the most platonic thing in the world. She dotes upon her absent husband, so why should she encourage the fervid Frenchman? At any rate, she does not discourage him, because he is at Mrs. Temple's house and in Mrs. Temple's society every day. A curiously fascinating woman is watching Mrs. Desdemona Temple and Mr. Cassio de Vigne. Cora Grey has a history. She was the schoolfellow of Mrs. Temple, and has renewed her acquaintance with her old friend. She has found her way to very comfortable quarters, and is behaving herself with perfect propriety. Little does Mrs. Temple in her innocence know the history of Cora Grey; little does she imagine that her old school friend has been passionately in love with, and yielded herself absolutely to, the man who subsequently fell in love with Mrs. Temple and married her. What reason is there that anyone should know such a secret save those to whom it belonged—the man and the woman? Cora Grey has erred, certainly, but she has repented of her error. She desires to inflict no injury on the woman who has supplanted her in the affection of the only man she has ever loved. All she desires is peace, and a true friendship with one and the other. Up to this time I cannot, with all due deference to the Pharisees, see that Cora Grey is much to blame. She has felt a strong, powerful love once in her life. She has tasted the sweetness of it; she cannot entirely

divest herself of its pleasant recollection; there is somewhere hidden away in her heart an abiding love for the man who has done her the greatest possible injury that man can do to woman. She loves him, as only woman can love, in spite of his worst faults, and fate brings her mysteriously to the very household where her trial of endurance will be the bitterest to bear. Here surely is human nature, let the professors of cant say what they will. The pebbles on the seashore washed away by one tide come back to the beach the next, and amidst the countless shells of ocean some two companions are united on the selfsame shore. The ways of life are mysterious. It is not so very wonderful, after all, that Cora Grey should find herself the guest, the innocent guest, of the man who loved her and lied to her, and who wrapped up his falsehood in the convenient cloak of matrimonial sanctity.

For who is the one to fling the first stone, and to pelt with the first handfuls of mud this sad, sweet woman, who only wants to be restful and forget? Why, the very man from whom she ought to expect the most mercy; the very lover who once swore that he loved her better than any woman on earth, and would be true to her and love her to his life's end; the very man who made her young life a paradise, and to whom, in her trust, she yielded herself, body and soul. Cora Grey admits that her position in Captain Temple's house is a questionable one. The world who saw the woman would admit it was a dangerous one. All she wants and all she asks is the pure friendship of the man who once loved her. She holds out her hand honestly to this man and asks him to bear with her a little for the sake of their old attachment. What does the gallant soldier do? He gratuitously insults the woman he has ruined by his abominable selfishness. He flings her fall—that he has caused—in her face. He hints that her presence will contaminate his pure wife and innocent offspring. He shakes his immaculate clothes in the face of the wretched woman, who loves him still in spite of his cowardice and cruelty, and he bids her begone. Please God! this is not human nature or anything approaching to it. I shall be asked by the purists what should such a man do under the circumstances? I reply do anything but insult the woman and scarify the heart that once had overflowed with love for him. It is quite reasonable on the part of this immaculate married man that he should feel that the temptation of Cora's presence would be too strong for him; it is quite right on his part to protect his wife from the danger of such a syren. He might not feel strong enough to encounter the hazard of such a friendship. What then should he do? Why, go to her and gently represent the impossibility of such an arrangement, speak kindly to her, take her by the hand, wish her well, thank her for her trust, and bid her be of good courage. He should say, "I have done you the greatest wrong a man can do a woman, but I will keep your secret as I know you will preserve mine. Thank God you have not been socially injured by the selfishness that I have practised on you. The love that still rests in your heart nothing can efface. But there has arisen a great barrier between us. Our ways in life have parted. Here is the signpost, let us shake hands and separate. You may be strong enough for an act of friendship, but I am not. I should be acting wrongly to the woman

who is my wife if I permitted myself to play with a temptation as great as this. Let us shake hands and part. Let there be no angry words between us, no bitterness, no recriminations. The past is past. The altar flame is dead, and there is no rekindling it. We may breathe upon the ashes, but there will be no flame any more.

We know not whether death be good,
  But life, at least, it will not be.
Men will stand, saddening as we stood,
  Watch the same fields and skies as we,
    And the same sea.

Let this be said, between us here,
  One's love grows green when one turns grey.
This year knows nothing of last year,
  To-morrow has no more to say
    To yesterday.

Live and let live, as I will do,
  Love and let love, and so will I.
But, Sweet, for me no more with you;
  Not while I live, not though I die.
    Good night! Good-bye!

This is how a man who is gentle would part from such a woman. He would not tell her of her contaminating influence, and make her out a moral pestilence. He would not absolve himself from all his former sins by the pleasant penance of matrimony, or tell the poor, sad, repentant creature by his side that her presence under the roof that shelters wife and child is a direct insult *to him*. At least, I venture to say that he would not do so if he were a hero. Many men—countless thousands of men—would act as Captain Temple did. They do so every day. Half the wretchedness of life is caused by such men, who ruin women, who marry, and pose as preachers of morality. But they are no heroes. Captain Temple is lauded up to us as a hero. He strikes his breast and thanks God he is not as other men are. He plumes his curls and goes to church on Sundays. He has covered himself with the veneer of respectability, and can afford to insult the woman who is not married and is not a mother—through his cruelty. Such men are not heroes, and it is astonishing to find them applauded for their misdeeds. But who can wonder at it when we are all under martial law; when we are tyrannised over by the martinets of the Salvation Army, whose revolting doctrines have lately been discovered to the world. When Churchmen and Cardinals endorse the action of howling psalm singers *et hoc genus omne*, and do not regret their error of judgment, we must not be surprised to find dramatists pandering to an age of cant.

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned." The insults of Captain Temple turn Cora Grey into a devil. He might have saved her, but he damns her to all eternity. At once she has the game in her own hands. She knows of the De Vigne episode, and she can ruin the peace of mind of both husband and wife. No one can defend such a woman, but she has been sorely tempted. From that moment the life of Captain Temple and his wife becomes utterly wretched, through the instrumentality of

the fiendish and insulted woman. He believes that his wife is carrying on an intrigue with De Vigne, and, owing to Cora's malignity, he is brought face to face with what appears to be their guilt. At once comes discord. Temple is called out on active service, and divorces his wife. The poor thing is hunted about from place to place, and her child—her only comfort now—is torn from her by a rascally solicitor. On the field of battle, in the Soudanese campaign, Captain Temple meets the supposed seducer of his wife, disguised as the confidential friend and adviser of the Mahdi, and from his dying lips he receives the confession of his wife's innocence. What more can he do then but hurry back to England to obtain forgiveness from the wife he has mistrusted, and receive the applause of his friends and countrymen for his heroic actions on the domestic hearth and the field of battle. But even then he cannot take his triumphs quietly. Cheered to the echo by a crowd at Charing Cross when marching into London at the head of his troops, and received back again to his wife's arms, he must needs go back again and have one more slap at Cora Grey, and preach a few more moral platitudes before the curtain. I may be singular, but I have no more hearty contempt for anyone in the play than for the officer and gentleman who is chosen for its hero. I prefer the baby-farmer. For he has not the safeguard of education and refined training.

Apart from these purely ethical considerations, the play is an extremely good one, the best constructed, and the most interesting of any that Mr. Harris and Mr. Pettitt have given us. It is full of life and light, there are no tedious scences, the situations are sharp and direct, and the stage picture of the return of the Guards is one of the best things of its kind that has been seen on Drury Lane stage since melodrama took the place of Shakespeare and the poetical drama. And, moreover, there is many an opportunity for good, bold, striking acting. The actors are not subordinate to the scenic decorations; they are superior to them. The scene painter, though he does a great deal, does not do as much for the drama as Miss Isabel Bateman, who is admirable in several pathetic scenes, and moves the whole house to tears when she endeavours to protect her child from harm. Miss Emmeline Ormsby is quite as good in a character of a totally different pattern, and suggests admirably the soul ruin of a woman who might have been saved by love but is ruined by uncharitable cruelty. The comic scenes of the play fall to Mr. Harry Nicholls and Miss Marie Illington, and they are delightfully played in a genuine light comedy fashion, and divested of all tedious vulgarity and exaggeration, but one of the best played of the smaller marked bits of character is the "baby farmer" of Mr. Fred Thorne. It is a sound, natural, artistic bit of acting that deserves very high praise for its moderation and skilful colouring. Such a play, so varied, so intense in its emotional scenes, so picturesque, and so well acted, cannot fail to be successful. It suits the middle class, and from the great body of the middle class our playgoers are recruited.

C. S.

"Ah! my great Corneille, come to my aid. . . enable me to prove to them all that we, the interpreters of thy genius, must, by inspiration of thy thought, gain some of thy nobility."

ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR.

Ellen Lancaster-Wallis

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,
263, OXFORD STREET, W.

Our Omnibus-Box.

I have received the following interesting memoir from Miss Wallis:—After some months' study under the late Mr. John Ryder, I made, when barely sixteen years of age, my first appearance *on any stage*, on the occasion of Mr. Creswick's benefit at the Standard Theatre, September 4, 1872. At three days' notice I played Pauline to that gentleman's Claud Melnotte. As I felt some doubt as to whether my nerves would be equal to the task of facing an audience for the first time, I stipulated that I should be announced under an assumed name, in case of failure. Accordingly, when I went to the theatre I found that I was Miss Lydia Courtney. However, the success of this performance was so undoubted that that same night I was engaged to make my recognised *début* at the Queen's Theatre in October. Previous to appearing there I made several appearances in Margate, under Mr. Ryder's management, playing Rosalind, Pauline, and The Wife. At the Queen's Theatre I appeared as Marguerite de Montcalm in Sir C. Young's "Montcalm;" as Mildred Vaughan in Watts Phillips' "Amos Clarke"; and made a crowning success in my creation of Elizabeth in Colonel Bates Richards' blank verse play of "Cromwell." Mr. Clement Scott wrote in most eulogistic terms on these later performances in the *Daily Telegraph*. On the termination of the season at the Queen's, I was engaged by the late Mr. John Knowles, of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, to appear there in February, 1873, as Marguerite in a grand production of "Faust and Marguerite." This ran for three months. Previous to leaving London, Mr. F. B. Chatterton (then lessee of Drury Lane and Adelphi Theatres) engaged me to appear in the autumn at Drury Lane Theatre, and to undertake the important *rôle* of Cleopatra in "Antony and Cleopatra," which was produced in September 1873. So great was the success I achieved in this *rôle* that Mr. Chatterton immediately offered me an engagement for the following seasons. At my request, afterwards, the agreement was altered to one season. Before the termination of my first autumn season at Drury Lane I appeared as Juliet for the first time. In the following spring, in answer to numerous invitations from provincial managers, I made my first round of the principal provincial cities and towns, and appeared with brilliant success as Pauline, Juliet, Rosalind, and Julia. In Dublin the enthusiasm was unbounded. My appearance as Rosalind made a marked impression, the audience rising *en masse* from their seats to wave hats and handkerchiefs. In Belfast the horses were taken from my carriage, and crowds surrounded the stage door. Even when I was expected at rehearsals the street would be crowded, and ovations made when I appeared. On my benefit night Jury's Hotel was surrounded by

hundreds of people, who were ultimately dismissed only by my addressing them personally. Everywhere, indeed, I was received with the most flattering proofs of appreciation. On returning to town I reappeared at Drury Lane, in August, in a revival of Amy Robsart, and in that character was remarkably well received by the press and the public. This impersonation was followed by that of Edith Plantagenet, in Andrew Halliday's adaptation of "The Talisman," the play being called "Richard Cœur de Lion." Juliet and Mrs. Ford ("Merry Wives of Windsor") were my other *rôles* during this autumn season of 1874. In the following March "Amy Robsart" was again revived for a short time by Mr. Chatterton. April, May, and June found me again seeking every opportunity of study by working hard in the provinces in the legitimate *rôles*. To the classical *répertoire* already named I produced in the provinces (and it was the first production for many years) "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Cymbeline," the stage versions of which I arranged myself from the text, also a blank verse play, by Colonel B. Richards, founded on the opera of "Norma." For the sake of rest and information, I now made a tour of the Continent, visiting Germany, Italy (where, by the way, I saw "Antony and Cleopatra" played in Italian), Switzerland, France. Returning to England, I gave performances for the first time in the South and West of England, Plymouth especially making a great favourite of me. The tour was extended through the principal cities and towns of the United Kingdom. The Christmas engagement at Belfast was marked by even more enthusiasm, if possible, than before, the quay on my departure being lined by hundreds of well-wishers, who even crowded on to the steamer to wish me *bon voyage*, and to congratulate me on my success. As we steamed away strains of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Come Back to Erin" were sent lustily after us. Straight on I went with my work, feeling more in love with it every day; not merely (great at the same time as it was) the incentive of the approval of the people which urged me on, but I could honestly say, as I say now, that the appeal my art ever seemed to me to make to that which is the noblest and better part of us lifted the work done, or aspired to, out of the regions of the theatre, and made it rather a school for the heart and brain to be better and healthier. No where more than in Edinburgh can such true students of Shakespeare be found. Therefore, I have always felt very great gratification in remembering how well my impersonations of the great master's heroines have been received there. In June, 1876, at Glasgow, in a performance of "Juliet," I terminated this long tour. On the 17th of the following August I was married to Mr. John Lancaster, of Harputhy, Manchester. For sixteen months after my marriage I rested from my work. During this time I stayed some months in Paris, and took the opportunity of studying art as exemplified at the Théâtre Français. I had also the good fortune to obtain an introduction to Mons. Regnier, and had the privilege of witnessing many a brave lesson and many grand hints given to his pupils. In October, 1877, I reappeared at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, and acted continually in the country until I made my re-appearance at Drury Lane in September, 1878, being engaged by Mr. F. B. Chatterton to appear as Hermione in a revival of "The Winter's Tale." I also played

Juliet, Desdemona, Ophelia, and Imogen. During the following year, 1879, I only made one or two visits to special towns. Notably I assisted in April at the opening of the New Theatre at Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon, Helen Faucit, Barry Sullivan, and myself playing alternately "Much Ado About Nothing," "As You Like It," and "Hamlet." Later in the year I again had the pleasure of being associated with Miss Faucit's rare appearances. Two performances of "As You Like It" were given in Manchester for the benefit of Charles Calvert. At the first Miss Faucit played, and on the second night I had the difficulty of being her successor in the part. The play was given by very distinguished amateurs, and to this day I can remember the bewilderment in which they felt themselves plunged by the different business of the two Rosalinds; how Mr. Lewis Wingfield was the Orlando; the late Mr. Tom Taylor, Adam; Mr. Herman Merivale, Touchstone; and a host of other celebrities. Again, later on, I made a special appearance in Manchester for the benefit of Mr. Tom Chambers. Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Terry played on one night "Charles I.," and on the next Mr. Barry Sullivan and myself played "Much Ado." I believe the benefit was a very big pecuniary success. During this year Mr. W. G. Wills had been at work on "Ninon" for me, and it was produced, with myself as the heroine, at the Adelphi Theatre, February 7, 1880, with highly gratifying success, and was subsequently no less well received on tour. The run of this piece was followed by an autumn and spring tour, when I was supported by a large and most excellent company of my own. In the summer of 1881 I appeared at the Olympic for a short season in some of my legitimate parts. During the autumn tour that followed, to my *répertoire* I added "Adrienne Lecouvreur." This addition formed an opportunity for me to widen my artistic sympathies in; indeed, there is hardly any other part in which, I am told, I play with greater fervour and intensity. During the year of 1882 ill health compelled me to rest for some months. I was able to appear in the spring at Edinburgh and Glasgow two weeks each, but the autumn tour was cancelled. I did not appear until December, when I was seen for the first time in London as Adrienne Lecouvreur at a *matinée* at the Vaudeville. The impersonation was received with great favour, the *Morning Post* being especially enthusiastic over it, and George Augustus Sala, referring to the performance and my past successes in London, speaks of me as the best Adrienne on the English stage. Many other flattering notices appeared. In the spring of 1883 I appeared in London in a series of *matinées*, my representation of Imogen especially delighting that veteran critic, Mr. Blanchard, who, not contented at writing a most flattering notice in the *Daily Telegraph*, confirmed his opinions in a most charming and much-valued note to me. A tour which commenced August 6, and terminated January 13, 1884, was then undertaken, when a new and entirely original play, written by Mr. J. W. Boulding and myself, entitled "Wife and State," was produced with unequivocal success at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh; and from that time it has been included in my *répertoire*. Ultimately we hope to present this piece to a London audience. I also added with wonderful success Isabella in "Measure for Measure" to my *répertoire*; the stage version I

prepared from the text. The tour formed for last autumn, and which commenced September 28, had not extended beyond the first five weeks, when I was most unfortunately seized with typhoid fever, and for several weeks I was considered to be in imminent danger. The company finished the tour, and when I woke from my illness in December it was to learn that one year's absolute cessation from work was rigorously imposed upon me. By the sea breeze and trips to Paris (again to study art at the Théâtre Français) have helped to lighten the tediousness of idleness to an active mind. And now having brought this memoir up to the present time, it only remains for me to state that Mr. Harris has arranged that I shall play "Denise" when that celebrated play of Dumas is done in London.

The following memoir of Mr. E. L. Blanchard appeared in the *Biograph* for February, 1882 :—Mr. E. L. Blanchard is the king of the only fairies that are known to us in these days of snorting "steam and piston-stroke." He is a kind of London Oberon, and for certain weeks in the snow-time of the year keeps court and festival in the middle of the largest city that has ever yet been known. What become of his elves in the summer months we do not know, unless they "creep into acorn-cups and hide them there;" but when the Christmas month comes round they obey the potent call of their master, and have done so for many years. Mr. Blanchard is not only ruler in Elfland, but he is the friend and philosopher of all good and sensible children who love and believe in the fairies that are under his power.

Edward Leman Blanchard was born in London on Monday, the 11th December, 1820. He is the younger son of the late William Blanchard. For thirty-five years the father was one of the most sterling and legitimate actors in the brilliant company organised at the beginning of the century under the management of the Kembles, of Covent Garden, and for nearly as long a period the son has written all the comic annuals that have been successively produced at Drury Lane. In 1835 the father died, and the son realised that he had his own way to make in the world. About that time the oxy-hydrogen microscope was making some stir, and after vainly seeking some employment, the lad obtained an engagement with an exhibitor, who, with a capitalist, had speculated in one of these instruments, and proposed to give entertainments all over the country. His duties were of the "general utility" kind, from the collecting of stagnant water full of water-beetles, efts, and other interesting creatures afterwards to be shown to the astonished rustics as the contents of a drop of *pure* water—to the delivery of the lecture itself, should the lecturer happen to be ill. The entertainment did not pay, and finally, when in the West of England, the capitalist and exhibitor retired in disgust, and young Blanchard was left without any money to find his way across the Mendip Hills to Bristol. Here fortune threw him against a scene-painter whom he knew. He borrowed half-a-crown, and with this walked to London, taking three days over the journey.

He then commenced operations for bread with the pen, a weapon that thousands grasp, but that only few can warm with life and meaning. The pen is a common thing in all our houses, but now and then there comes

"And to see how many of mine old acquaintance are dead."

KING HENRY IV. PART II

E. L. Blanchard

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,
263, OXFORD STREET, W.

along a man who can make it more powerful than the rod of Prospero He can make marks with it on paper that no schoolmaster can teach. He can command spirits from the vasty deep—and they will come; he can do more than the old alchemists; for with his bit of steel and his little bottle of black liquid he can produce gold—and such gold too as will buy good beef in the market. But he must have the secret that is not learnt from masters and professors, but that each man must learn for himself or go without—the great secret of the at-one-ment with nature that made a greater poet and philosopher of an English yeoman than has ever yet been produced by the combined learning of all the colleges of the whole world.

Even as a boy, Blanchard had enough power over the pen to serve his turn—to earn his living. Between his seventeenth and twentieth years he produced as many as thirty dramas, farces, and burlesques; and these were not profitless labours either. They may not have been sprinkled with gems of thought, but they represented work paid for. Under the *nom-de-plume* of Francisco Frost, he also wrote a number of pantomimes for one or other of the minor theatres. In 1841 he was so well known as a dramatic writer that he was retained at the Olympic Theatre as the stock dramatist. In addition to writing for the stage, he was making the most of his leisure by contributing to periodicals. At the end of 1841, being then only in his twenty-first year, he was editing a literary miscellany, published every Saturday, and entitled *Chambers's London Journal*, which lived for about a year and a half. While busy with his weekly journal, there was produced at the Olympic Theatre a one-act farce of his called "The Artful Dodge," in the enjoyment of which no doubt many of our readers have made themselves red in the face. A year afterwards he wrote for the same theatre, in ridicule of the melodramatists of that time, a droll piece of work called "Pork Chops, or a Dream at Home." Then followed a number of dramatic pieces of all sorts, as some of the titles will show: "The Road of Life," "Angels and Lucifers," "Game and Game," "Magic Mirror," "The Invisible Client," "Jack Noakes and Tom Styles," "The Cobbler of Coblenz," "Cinderella," "Babes in the Wood," "The Merchant of Venice, melodised for the Million," "Jack and the Beanstalk," and "Faith, Hope, and Charity; or, Chance and Change."

Altogether apart from stage work, Mr. Blanchard has had a great love for writing such matter as finds its way into the comic press, and he has contributed to most of the comic sheets that for a time tried to successfully strive against *Punch*. One of these productions *(Fun)* has lived, and to this Mr. Blanchard has contributed a great deal of sprightly matter worthy the title of the sheet. He has also been tempted towards literary work of a very different kind. He edited "Dugdale's England and Wales Delineated," and also "Willoughby's Shakespeare," each work being a really laborious undertaking. Turning from this sober and steady work, he has been incited to rival the prophecies of Zadkiel, the star-seer, the flood-teller, the famine and war prophet, and when twenty-four years old started the mystic and awe-inspiring *Astrologer, and Oracle of Destiny*. On the title-page was a long-bearded and ancient man with the stars

around him, and who looked as though he could read them easily, and would eat them also, if necessary. Scores of people went every week to the office, which was at 11, Wellington Street North, to seek the advice of the venerable dealer in destiny. They never found him, however; he was always out. They no doubt occasionally saw a slim and beardless young man, but it never occurred to them that he was the old reader of the stars any more than they suspected he was the man in the moon. In another field of work Mr. Blanchard has confessed, in his own amusing way, how he once created a new animal—the octoped. He had a block given him which he had to introduce into an article on natural history, and as far as he could make out the representation was that of an animal with *eight* feet. As there was no information to be obtained on the subject, he had to fit his matter to the illustration, and accordingly described what he called an octoped. Some time after he discovered that the appearance of this extraordinary creature was due to the engraver, whose knife, in cutting the block, had slipped, and so created the additional feet.

Turning from astrology and fate, we find Mr. Blanchard in a very common world—writing guide-books. Having produced a number of "Bradshaw's Descriptive Railway Guides," he wrote "Adams's Illustrated Descriptive Guides to the Watering Places of England, and Companion to the Coast." This appeared in 1848, and another edition of the work was called for in 1855. In the last-named year he also produced "Adams's Illustrated Descriptive Guide to the English Lakes." He also wrote "Adams's Descriptive Guide to the Environs of the Metropolis." During the year of the first great International Exhibition he produced "The Stranger's and Visitor's Conductor through London." In 1859 was published his "Adams's Descriptive Guide to the Channel Islands, the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man." With the toil of putting together matter-of-fact guide books (which contained, however, a good deal of pleasant gossip) he had the amusement of producing such books as "The Carpet Bag, crammed full of Light Articles for Shortening Long Faces and Long Journeys," and a "Handy Book on Dinners and Diners at Home and Abroad, with Piquant Plates and Choice Cuts." These were followed by two novels, "Temple Bar" and "Man without a Destiny."

It should have been stated that at twenty-five Mr. Blanchard was already editing the *New London Magazine*, which lived for about twelve months. During its existence Albert Smith was one of its contributors. Mr. Blanchard has played many parts—editor, compiler, essayist, lyrist, critic, novelist, and dramatist; and still there is another kind of work yet to be mentioned—such, for instance, as "The Carpet Bag and Sketch Book," which he wrote for Mr. W. S. Woodin, and "The Seven Ages of Woman," which he produced for Miss Emma Stanley. Other entertainments he has put together, but the two we have named are his best. "A Norrible Tale" is from his pen, and a drawing-room play entitled "The Three Temptations." Running through this strange mass of diversified work is the long line of pantomimes, for which Mr. Blanchard has won a separate and special reputation. He has not only given Drury Lane all its comic annuals for more than thirty years, but he has occasionally

supplied other theatres with pantomimes. Prolific and diversified as he has been in his dramatic work, he has never dramatised a novel nor adapted anything from the French. It may be added that since 1858, Mr. E. L. Blanchard has remained on the Literary Staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, and that for more than fifteen years he has contributed weekly essays on "London Amusement," to the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*.

It should be mentioned that Mr. E. L. Blanchard had the rare good fortune in later life to marry the lady who was the object of his affection in youth, and to whom were dedicated his earliest lyrics, published more than forty years ago. For some time past Mrs. E. L. Blanchard has been a leading member of the Committee of "The Women's Emigration Society," and, chiefly through her influence, and her practical knowledge of a subject becoming every day of more importance to the feminine community in this country, several thousands of young women who could find no employment in the United Kingdom have been placed in most advantageous situations in the British Colonies.

Mr. Henry Turner sends the following note on the veteran actor, William Creswick :—I first saw William Creswick in the year 1847. The theatre was the Princess's, and the play Lord Byron's "Werner," with Macready in the title *rôle*. Gabor was represented by Ryder, while Ulric was played by Creswick. It was with considerable interest I watched his first entrance, for rumour had sounded his praises anent his efforts at the far distant Sadler's Wells, then under the management of Phelps and Greenwood. I experienced a slight feeling of disappointment as I contrasted his short stature as compared with the commanding presence of James Anderson in the same part. But I had not listened to a dozen spoken lines ere I was convinced that a capable actor was before me. Especially I admired the easy grace of his bearing as he acknowledged his cordial reception, and then the self-possession with which he leant against the wing on the left side, looking off the stage, waiting till it was his cue to speak. For many years he was one of my dramatic idols, and the greatest proof that he was a performer of ability is that he played in conjunction with such artistes as Macready, Phelps, Helen Faucit, and Mrs. Nisbett. I am afraid to say how many times I have seen him play Claude Melnotte at the Haymarket to the original Pauline of the "Lady of Lyons," Helen Faucit. When he played with Phelps in "Othello" the two actors were accustomed to alternate the parts of Othello and Iago, although I think both performers were seen to the best advantage when Phelps played Iago and Creswick Othello. The fiery, impetuous style of the latter suited the character of the jealous, excitable Moor, while the cold, sarcastic phlegm of Phelps gave point to the speeches of Iago. Then it was a great treat to see these two admirable performers in Brutus and Cassius. Here again they were best fitted when Phelps played the cool, impassible Brutus, and Creswick the hasty and impulsive Cassius. A favourite character of Creswick's was Joseph Surface, which always fell to his lot when a regular member of the Haymarket

company. He was undoubtedly one of the best, if not *the* best, Master Walter ever seen on the boards. A notable cast of the "Hunchback" was the one I witnessed at the Haymarket:—Master Walter, Creswick; Clifford, Howe; Tinsel, Alfred Wigan; Julia, Helen Faucit; and Helen, Mrs. Nisbett; and, I think, Fathom, Compton. I remember a leading journalist, speaking of the acting of Creswick in the fourth act, said:—"More powerful acting has rarely been witnessed," And here I must pause to record that I am no more blind to the faults, artistically considered, of William Creswick than a father is blind to the faults of a favourite child. He was more stagey than his great model, William Macready. He was occasionally hard and somewhat artificial, reproducing in an exaggerated form the worst faults of his great prototype. But he possessed in a greater degree than I have ever witnessed (except Macready in "Werner") the rare gift of *fire*—great earnestness, with enthusiasm, and an exalted idea of his noble profession. No actor has ever made me thrill like Creswick did in the farewell scene of "The Lady of Lyons," in some lines in "Virginius," and in the famous scene in "Romeo and Juliet," when he casts himself on the ground, "taking the measure of an unmade grave." In the great scene with Iago, in the third act of "Othello," the effect was a perfect crescendo of excitement, causing the audience to applaud for several minutes, while Othello sank exhausted on the couch, in the conventional fashion. His Julian St. Pierre was a picturesque and powerful rendering of the part. I chanced to be present at the funeral of T. P. Cooke in Brompton Cemetry some twenty-two years ago. I suppose there was a larger attendance of the dramatic profession than was ever seen on a similar occasion. Every actor and actress in London, of any repute, in deep mourning, was present. Immediately the last mourning coach had entered the gates, the actors prepared to walk, bare-headed, four abreast in the rear of the *cortége*. I could not help being quietly amused at the matter-of-course manner in which Creswick assumed his proper position of walking in the first four. I remember that Webster and Buckstone occupied seats in one of the mourning coaches. Many years ago a Mr. Kempster (father of Ely Kempster, who till lately adorned the boards of Toole's Theatre, till she made her exit through the porch of Hymen) called on William Creswick with a view to adopting the stage as a profession. In the course of conversation the actor thus syllogistically stated his views of the art of acting:—"Acting is an art, or it is not an art. If it is an art, everybody cannot do it; if it is not an art, everybody can do it. As everybody can't do it, therefore it is an art." There is an admirable portrait of Creswick in the National Portrait Gallery at South Kensington. It is a three-quarter length, painted many years ago, and will give a good idea to the present generation of the enthusiastic Shakespearian student in his youthful days. William Creswick has been seen so little of late in London that to the rising generation of playgoers he can only be a name, conveying no associations, and reviving no memories. At the

age of seventy-two he is about to have a benefit, under special patronage. In the few hasty lines I have written I have endeavoured to sketch the merits of the admirable actor and excellent man, and to assure the youthful playgoers who may be present at the forthcoming performance that when they gaze on William Creswick as he bows his acknowledgments, they behold one of the worthies of the stage, who has afforded delight to thousands in bygone years, an enthusiastic votary of his profession, a deep-thinking Shakespearian student, an excellent man, and a perfect gentleman.

I have received the following notes from my amiable correspondent in Melbourne:—"La Fille du Tambour Major," which followed "Iolanthe" at the Theatre Royal, was but a partial success, yet managed to keep the boards until July 11th, when Mr. Dion Boucicault made his first appearance in the Australian colonies in his own drama, "The Shaughraun." It is needless to say that his venture has proved successful in the extreme, and crowded houses await him nightly. Miss Nina Boucicault is scarcely up to our standard of excellence in the parts entrusted to her; but Mr. "Dot" Boucicault has made a favourable impression. On July 25th Mr. Boucicault staged his latest comedy, "The Jilt," but it did not suit our critical tastes. The first two acts were excellent, but the remainder are devoted entirely to horseflesh, for the comedy is racy, and, to coin a term, "Flying Scud"-dy. On August 3rd "Colleen Bawn" replaced "The Jilt," and is now running. Miss Nina appears as Eily O'Connor, Dion the younger as Danny Mann, and Miss Agnes Thomas—a capable actress—as Ann Chute. Mr. Boucicault can have no reason to complain of his reception in these colonies; it has been hearty, well-intentioned. The Theatre Royal is crowded nightly to see him, and he gains as much applause as the heart of an actor could desire. The students of the University packed the gallery one evening, and serenaded him with a choice selection of Irish and profane melodies. Of the ladies—Misses Agnes Thomas and Horndyke—he brought with him we speak in terms of high praise; but the male members of his company are disappointing. "Arrah-na-Pogue" is to be the next drama presented. Mr. Geo. Darrell, who recently played at your Grand Theatre and met with an accident, wooed fickle Fortune at our Opera House on June 27th with an original Australian drama, "The Squatter," which was damned off-hand. On July 18th "The Sunny South," the drama he played in London, was revived and drew fair houses for two weeks, but gave way on August 1st to another original drama, "Back from the Grave," an improbable mesmeric and clairvoyant play, which received worse treatment than "The Squatter." Mr. Darrell closes his season on August 8th, and goes to Adelaide. On August 10th Mr. Geo. Rignold revives "Confusion" at this theatre. The Bijou Theatre has been given over to a revival of miscellaneous operas until August 3rd, when Miss Geneviève Ward opened her farewell season in Melbourne with "Forget-me-Not." Her success has been as great as before, and, what is more, as profitable. "Mammon" is to be her next attraction. Emerson's Minstrels have been doing good business at St. George's Hall; and a troupe styling themselves "The Aerial Beauties"

—a mixed minstrel company, the ladies of which recline in hammocks and sit on swings—have been pleasing people who like that sort of thing. The Opera Company lately at our Theatre Royal are playing "Iolanthe" at the Royal in Sydney. Mr. Frank Thornton has made the hit of the season in that city with "The Private Secretary," which he is playing at the Gaiety." A Comedy Company at the Opera House are playing a version by Mr. Phil Day of Alfred Hennequin's "Les Trois Chapeaux" under the name of "Mixed." I should not be surprised if this turn out a version of Dove and Maltby's "Three Hats." Adelaide, the third of our cities, is quiet so far as regards the drama. Mr. Geo. Rignold and Miss Kate Bishop are appearing in "Called Back" at the Theatre Royal, Mr. John F. Sheridan is playing "Fun on the Bristol" at Garner's Theatre, and Mr. G. A. Sala is lecturing at the Academy of Music. Mr. Wybert Reeve is the only actor of any note on tour in New Zealand. Mr. Harry Rickards is now appearing in Brisbane. M. Henri Kowalski, assisted by Madame Poussard, is giving pianoforte recitals at our Town Hall; and Concert-Meister Kruse, of the Berlin Conservatorium—a Victorian native—is also giving a series of performances at the same place. Mr. Pinero's comedy, "Lords and Commons," is in rehearsal for production at our Opera House.

Regretfully enough I can say nothing good of "The Japs," recently produced at the Novelty Theatre, and arranged in order to make us all laugh as we cheerfully did at the "Babes" last year at Mr. Toole's Theatre. In the first place, I do not understand the mania for Japanese pieces. Years ago there was a Japanese craze, but it has died out. In decorative work Japan has ceased to have much influence. Women with jet-black hair are not very fascinating to English tastes, and few refined minds care for the artistic monstrosities that modern Japan produces. We admire their bold and beautiful scheme of colour, but all their best workmanship in lacquer and bronze is wasted on hideous forms, dreadful dragons, and antideluvian devils. A bit of Japanese drapery is lovely to behold, but a household is made hideous by barbarous ornamental designs. Even the "Mikado" came rather late in the day, when the Eastern curiosity mania was dying out. The new burlesque has not contributed to the feeble joke, and it is sad to see Mr. Brough, Mr. Edouin, and Miss Alice Atherton wasting their talent on such dreary childishness. I should think that "The Japs" was even too silly for the ordinary patrons of these essentially tedious entertainments, and who regard the modern music-hall, with its collar grinning horseplay as the *ne plus ultra* of fun.

Miss Lily Tinsley is to be congratulated on her first flight in the fields of the drama, and she has been warmly welcomed to the boards of the Surrey Theatre. She has found a clever, suggestive, and experienced collaborateur in Mr. George Conquest, who has helped her to arrange "Devil's Luck" for the stage. It is a drama of the old-fashioned Surrey type, full of murder, abduction, child stealing, lying and slandering, and it is moreover disfigured by one of the false moral heroes who appear to

be the product of the age. A weak young man who is condoled with on account of the necessity of leaving the woman he has deceived and marrying some one else for whom he does not profess to care a farthing, is a not very interesting specimen of humanity. The acting is very much better than could have been expected. Mr. George Conquest revels in pathetic characters, and a Mrs. Bennett, who is cast for the heroine, is an actress of decided intelligence and considerable power. Those who would sup bountifully on horror, and in the course of a few hours drink in incessant excitement, should see "Devil's Luck."

I have received the following interesting letter from Mr. William Douglas :—There are one or two errors in Mr. Austin Brereton's account of the late Richmond Theatre which, as a matter of historical record, you may think it worth while to correct. The theatre was first opened Saturday, June 15, 1765, with "Love in a Village," a prologue written by Garrick (which may be found in *The Gentleman's Magazine*), and a farce —probably "The Mock Doctor, as that was played the following week. It was at first called the New Theatre, Richmond Green. The name King's Theatre was conferred upon it by Penley, who succeeded Klanert in the management. The old theatre on the hill continued open as late as 1767. On June 6 in that year, Shuter spoke a prologue there, in which the plainness of the building was contrasted with the splendour of the new house. In THE THEATRE for 1881, there is a list of some of the principle performers who appeared on the boards of the late theatre. Certainly Garrick never *acted* there, though he visited the house to see his pupil, Cautherly, during Love's management. The performances at Richmond were regularly advertised in the London papers from the opening night until long after Garrick quitted the stage. The name Hearon, page 124, is a mistake for Fearon.

Mr. F. H. Celli, who is just now in superb voice, and, having recovered from a serious accident, is ready and well enough to act again, meditates an instant trip to America, where he will be warmly welcomed. Such singers and actors are rare on the operatic stage. He takes with him in his portmanteau a new opera, written by two Frenchmen who are anxious to have their work performed in English before it is produced in Paris, where it has been accepted without a moment's hesitation. I do not wonder at that, for the music is charming, and I am confident will make a stir when it is heard. The clever composer is M. Ivan Caryll, who is known as the author of some delightful songs. The opera is light, but it is high-class work, and is not disfigured by inane jokes or empty vulgarity. Mr. Celli will be accompanied to America by M. Caryll, who is anxious that American impresarios shall hear his work. At present there is little market for such operas in England, but the time will come when we shall have romantic opera on the lighter lyric stage.

Far from the Footlights.

I WANDER by the northern wave,
When all the seas are lashed to fury,
And wonder how the "gods" behave
At "Human Nature" in Old Drury.
I seem to see the curtain rise
On Pettitt and Augustus Harris;
The while the spectacle outvies
The best that can be done in Paris.

I seem to see the critics there,
Old friends whom duty bids attend all
First nights; they watch the play with care—
My Scott, my Brereton, and my Bendall.
Then off they rush and each man writes;
The busy brain the swift pen urges;
While I, unwitting of first nights,
Am idling where the ocean surges.

And then the suppers when the work
Is o'er, at Beefsteak or the Garrick.
Description of such scenes I shirk;
'Twould need, methinks, a bard Pindaric
To chronicle the wit and chaff,
The flow of soul, the feast of reason,
The banter and the hearty laugh,
That ushers in the Autumn season.

I see the wide Haymarket stage,
The scene of busy work and bustle,
And Comyns Carr, I dare engage,
Is much with Bashford and with Russell.
I've seen a many score of plays,
Some whose success was not quite certain;
But dare prognosticate "Dark Days"
Will bring my friend before the curtain.

And as I let my fancy range
O'er all the spots I love so dearly,
The thought of theatres seems strange,
And all the actors phantoms merely.
For lo! across the sunlit sea
The white sails pass in panorama,
And life in London seems to me
A scene in some forgotten drama.

H. Savile Clarke.

THE THEATRE.

The Stage and its Detractors.

By Frank Marshall.

THIS magazine, being devoted to the interests of that art which is, perhaps, as free as any art at the present day—at least, in England—from the taint of impurity, it cannot be a pleasant task for us to deal with the horrible revelations which have unhappily been allowed to disgrace this country during the last few months But it is a singular coincidence that those who have supported and encouraged misguided people in their too successful attempts, under cover of a crusade against vice, to pollute the minds of old and young throughout the country have, with very few exceptions, been recruited from the most prominent denouncers of the stage as a corrupter of morality. It is this coincidence which induces us to allude to a subject that otherwise we should be glad to avoid. But, from the first, there has been mixed up with these detestable revelations such a tendency to slander the stage and all connected with it, that silence is no longer possible.

One of the dignitaries of the Church, who—with a singular recklessness, to say the least—has indirectly, if not directly, sanctioned a deplorable publication, has lately deigned to speak his opinions upon the subject of the stage, in answer to an invitation from the Church and Stage Guild to co-operate with that body in their well-meaning attempts to reconcile the clerical and dramatic professions. Between Church and Stage there should be no hostility; but, unfortunately, there has been what we believe is only an apparent hostility, entirely created and fostered by the wanton attacks on the stage made by ignorant members of the clergy, who cannot recognise the fact that the noblest of human amusements has always sought alliance, and not war, with the noblest principles of religion.

The study of psychology is absolutely necessary to all exponents of the drama, and it is therefore very interesting to those who are connected with the stage, either as authors or habitual frequenters of the theatre, to study the nature of the episcopal mind, which could persuade its owner that there was nothing disgraceful or immoral in lending the sanction of his name to a publication that has been condemned by most earnest and right-minded men. The Bishop of London, who has written a letter on the subject of the ballet, does not pretend in that letter to condemn the stage altogether. He has not—at least, in his letter, though apparently he did so in his interview with Mr. Stewart Headlam*—quite sufficient courage to do that. He fixes, in his letter, particularly on the ballet, and he declares that, in his belief, "there is much on the stage, and in particular in the ballet, which does grave mischief to many young men; possibly to many young women." According to this episcopal authority, the effect of the ballet is "to encourage in young men the general opinion that a low standard of purity is natural and permissible in the male sex." He is kind enough "to acquit the dancers from all share of the evil which affects the spectators." He adds, in the plenitude of his condescension towards a class with which he has evidently no personal acquaintance:—"Of course, there are evil-minded among them; but I have no reason to believe that the evil-minded are numerous." In fact, in the paroxysm of charity which has, for the time, seized him, he actually admits that "some publicans and even some barmaids might be good people." Merciful Bishop! even to publicans and barmaids he will not close Heaven. This act of episcopal condescension is one that must be gratifying to all men and women, but especially to those whose sphere of life lies behind the bar of a publichouse.

Some years ago I was fortunate enough to witness a most magnificent ballet at the San Carlo Theatre at Naples. The title of this grand work was "Alpha and Omega;" no misnomer, for it commenced with the Creation of the World and ended with the Last Judgment. In the book containing the plot, which was to be purchased for the small sum of sixpence—a copy of which is still, I am happy to say, in my possession—the composer of the ballet was

* Mr. Headlam's words (as reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, October 2nd, 1885):—"His lordship asked Mr. Headlam to call upon him at Fulham Palace, and there *condemned the stage altogether*."

kind enough to give a list of those persons whom he graciously permitted to go to heaven at the last day. Among them, I regret to say, there were only two Englishmen, and neither was a Bishop. Watts was one of them. I fondly hoped it might be the composer of that charming lyric, "How doth the little busy bee," but it was not. It was the inventor, or the supposed inventor, of the steam engine; the other was, I think, Newton. Even among the members of other nations admitted to eternal happiness by this Rhadamanthus of the ballet, there was not a single Right Reverend person.

Now, having read the episcopal excommunication of the ballet, I begin to think that the inventor of "Alpha and Omega" must have been gifted with the prophetic faculty, and that, in the exercise of his usurped powers as to the fate of those who had passed away from life, he was anticipating the episcopal condemnation of the art by which he lived; and, for that reason, he declined to admit any Bishop into the heaven of his own creating.

But this is a digression. Let us return to the Bishop and his censures as they affect the stage. Does his Lordship consider that no impure emotions are ever excited in the breasts of young men by that very common form of social intercourse, an evening party, "small and early"? Will his Lordship go so far as to denounce all those members of his flock who entertain their friends at a carpet dance, or at a more elaborate ball? May we expect to see his Lordship stalking, like an angel of purity, into the saloon of some noble duchess, and covering with strips of his episcopal lawn the shoulders of the young ladies who so freely display them? Surely, if the argument holds good that the ballet is an immoral institution because it is likely to encourage impurity, it would be unfair to stop there, and not to extend the episcopal denunciation to all other forms of amusement, whether public or private, which cannot fail to incur a similar danger! If English mothers wish all their sons to emulate Joseph, and all their daughters to rival Saint Agnes, would they—if they possess the abnormal delicacy of the Bishop of London—allow them to whirl round the room, in close embrace, to the stimulating and seductive music of one of Strauss' waltzes? I think not; but, at the same time, I feel sure that there are very few mothers—at least, among those who fully recognise the sacred duties involved in that name—who do not know that purity does not consist in greedily searching for the possibly impure, but in that self-restraint of thought, of word, and of deed, which must be con-

stantly exercised in all the relations of civilised life. There would be an end to all social intercourse between men and women, if we were once to admit that the possibility of an impure taint in that intercourse was a sufficient reason for forbidding it altogether.

Let the Right Reverend Bishop denounce, if he will, any special performances, the manifest aim of which is to corrupt public purity. In doing this he will not have any more earnest and faithful allies than the members of that profession which he deigns to condemn. The English stage is the purest in the whole civilised world, because the members of the dramatic profession in this country are, as a body, most strongly opposed to anything like degradation of the profession to which they belong; and because the audiences of our theatres are recruited, not from among the small body of voluptaries into whose hands, by keeping away all persons of better feelings from theatres, these unwise, wholesale damnators of the stage would throw the practical control of all dramatic entertainments, but from the large body of the unprejudiced public whose instincts are, in spite of the cant of the Bishop of London's *protegées*, both healthy and pure. As long as those, who reverence religion at the same time that they love the drama, are found in great numbers among the audience in every theatre, so long will our stage be preserved from the contamination of profligacy; so long will our dramatists ask for the sympathies of their auditors with virtue and not with vice; so long will the innocence of childhood and the purity of maidenhood be held in holiest reverence upon our stage; and that corruption, which exists only in the diseased imaginations of prurient Pharisees, be kept far away, by the omnipotent voice of public opinion, from what is, in spite of some faults and of the Bishop of London's denunciations, the wholesomest form of intellectual amusement that mankind can enjoy.

Among the other ecclesiastical dignitaries who supported the phalanx of Pharisaism are the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Manning. What the Archbishop of Canterbury's opinions are upon the stage we do not know. Archbishop Benson has, however, set his *imprimatur* on the revolting revelations that are to make us all pure by tainting the universal mind with spurious records of impurity and the sneaking and un-English system of vigilance societies. Probably he will be remembered by this achievement, quite as much as by anything else he has hitherto done in his position as Primate of all England. It is curious, by

the way, that both these divines were Head Masters of the largest public schools in England. Alas! for the training of the modern English schoolboy.

We now come to Cardinal Manning, whose presence on the now too famous committee is a subject of deep regret to many Roman Catholics in England. His enmity to the stage, as is popularly believed, almost amounts to fanaticism. It is no secret that he would gladly, if he could, put an end to those dramatic performances at Roman Catholic public schools, which have given so much innocent pleasure, and have encouraged so much the study of Shakespeare and the higher class of dramas among the pupils of those schools. He has more than once denounced the Stage. Clearly unfamiliar with the life of the modern drama and the noble struggles of its upholders, he has not scrupled to tell those many members of his flock—and let us add no unworthy members—who earn their bread upon the stage, that he holds them as moral outcasts, belonging to a profession which can work no good, and which, in his opinion, works nothing but evil. Theatres, according to his Eminence, are "centres of immorality;" because, forsooth, being situated in leading thoroughfares, vice is found congregated outside their portals, much as it is found outside those of Exeter Hall, and even outside churches which happen to be similarly situated. It was but the other Sunday that it was our painful duty to listen to a Christian minister, who illustrated his denunciations of the immorality of the world by the fact that "there were theatres, which not only offered opportunities of vice *outside their doors*," but which ministered to it within. We should have thought that common sense, to say nothing of Christian charity, might have made any one pause before he attributed to the inherent sinfulness of theatres what is really their misfortune. Looking at it from its very lowest point of view—a point of view with which some reverend gentlemen are not wholly unfamiliar; we mean the question of pecuniary advantage—it must be evident that theatrical managers would be only too glad to get rid of the loafers, male and female, who infest their doors; to say nothing of the more vicious frequenters of the streets, and, above all, of those persons who, till lately, were so conspicuous a nuisance—the vendors of that abominable literature for which the professors of righteousness have never had one word of condemnation.

To the many members of his own flock, yearly increasing in

numbers, who are included in the theatrical profession, an earnest priest might surely speak some word of encouragement. He might tell them that their church recognises the many temptations of their life—perhaps, after all, not more than the temptations which beset every profession—and that it freely holds out to them its countenance, its comfort, its support; that it looks upon them, in no way, as less worthy members of its body than those who are placed amongst the highest ranks of society, or who have adopted professions more generally honoured by the world. With regard to so-called Salvationists, any attacks they may make upon the stage must be a matter of supreme indifference to every earnest person connected with it. We must go back to very dark days indeed in the history of the British theatre, before we can hope to find any dramatic productions which could have the slightest chance of attaining that standard of purity which the culture of cant has set up.

The proprietor of a vulgar booth at a fair looks with little favour upon the large and comparatively respectable edifice, where the most primitive form of the legitimate drama is provided for the frequenters of the fair. Loud and deep, and perhaps not very choice in their terms, must be the curses of such an entertainer directed against his more prosperous rival. A Salvation Army tout knows very well that, could he prejudice a considerable portion of the public against theatres as immoral places, he would be able to attract a much larger audience to those vulgar pantomimes of religion of which he is the manager. As it is, he appeals to that passion for dressing up which is so common amongst vulgar minds; and though, at the best, his processions and noisy gatherings of ranting nuisances are very much inferior to the very worst pantomime produced in the smallest country theatre; nevertheless, to those vulgar minds, they offer some attraction which would be still greater, were there not the wholesome and purer attraction of the theatre to draw them away from the noisy orgies of shameless self-righteousness and blasphemous cant, with which the Salvation Army celebrates its victories.

There is one question with regard to the toleration which has been shown by ecclesiastical dignitaries and self-styled religious people towards the revelations, which we cannot help asking. What would have been the fate of any theatrical manager who might

have dared to place upon the stage, in its very pungent entirety, any one of Wycherley's or Congreve's comedies, or even some of the highly-flavoured works of Brome, or Marston, or one of the two masterpieces of Nat Field. The manager might have declared that his only object was to show the public to what a terrible length writers might go, when the restraint of decency was once removed. He might have said, "Look, my dear friends, to what an abyss of immorality educated men and women might be brought by the removal of those unwritten laws which restrain licentiousness, at least, in public. Behold, my friends, to what horrible impurities women, presumably respectable, could bring themselves to listen without a blush. What scenes of riot and debauchery could be represented on the stage, in the time of our wretched ancestors, over whom the name of the 19th century Mrs. Grundy exercised no wholesome terror." We can quite believe that the manager, putting forward some such excuses as these for presenting plays more or less indecent, might have been quite as sincere as the secret commission in their apologies for their gratuitous insults. But would the manager have met with any countenance from reverend and right reverend persons? Would there not have been one scream of righteous indignation at the horrible outrage on public decency? Not that we have the slightest desire to see prurient purity introduced into our theatres.

But let not the churches and their authorities mistake the attitude which those who really represent the stage would adopt towards them. To the ministers of all denominations, so long as they show themselves worthy of their sacred calling, persons connected with the theatre are ready to pay due respect. Actors and actresses, when they need the ministrations of religion, do not approach the priest or the altar with an atom of less veneration than members of any other profession. We do not claim for those connected with the stage any exceptional degree of moral excellence. Like all other professions, the stage must number among its votaries husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, old men and old women, young men and young women, who are far from faultless in their relations towards one another and towards the world. It is a great mistake to pretend that the members of the dramatic profession are any better than their neighbours; but we maintain most strongly that

they are not any worse. In one point, perhaps—their readiness to help one another—like other communities which the world affects to despise, they are rather better. Nor does the stage ask of the church to be patronised or patted on the back. It does not ask to have its members trotted out on platforms as exceptional phenomena of the Christian virtues. We sincerely trust there is no actor or actress, however complete their "conversion" may have been, who would consent to drivel out in public the experience of their former evil doings, and to whine out hymns in laudation of their own piety, or to boast of the very excellent terms on which they stand with their Creator and Saviour. We don't care for converted clowns. All that the stage asks of the Church is, to treat it with common fairness and what should be common charity. Those who earn their daily bread in our theatres do not expect to be denounced by priest or parson, as if they were members of some association whose object it is to corrupt or destroy public morality; nor do they wish to be mildly commended and presented with moral sugar-plums as being very good children, considering their temptations; nor to be assured, with a smile of ineffable toleration, that they have *not* habitually broken every one of the Ten Commandments. We repeat, the Stage has no hostility to the Church; but those who have adopted the stage as a profession, whatever be their artistic status, will not submit to be constantly maligned and misrepresented by the dignitaries of any Church, whether they be Archbishops or Bishops, priests or curates, elders or deacons, or whatever else they may please to call themselves. We live in an age when all Christian Churches must be prepared to resist the attacks of enemies as bitter as they are unscrupulous, when they will have to appeal from the verdict of hatred and malice to that of moderation and of justice, Let the ministers of these Churches take care that they may be able to make such an appeal with a clear conscience; let them take care that they themselves have not been guilty of that very injustice against which they so earnestly protest.

An English Ballet in Spain.

By Walter Goodman.

ONE of the oddest experiences that can happen to the traveller who goes to a foreign clime for a quiet holiday and the benefit of his health, occurred to the present writer when, for the reasons just referred to, he betook himself, in the autumn of 1862, to Barcelona.

Spain had always been a favourite country of mine as long as I could remember. I liked its language which I spoke with tolerable fluency; I liked its people—many of my best friends being Spaniards whom I had associated with in Italy and elsewhere—and I was fond of its traditions, connected as these were with romance, chivalry, and Don Quixote; with bull-fights, dancing, and Don Juan. I was partial also to its drama; first because I was everywhere a lover of the stage, and second because I had witnessed in Spain many excellent "comedias de costumbre," or domestic dramas, and "zarzuelas" or musical pieces, and heard many admirable actors and singers of both sexes.

In my wanderings abroad it had been my invariable habit to visit every local theatre, or place of entertainment in the town where I had halted, upon the proverbial principle of doing in Rome as Romans do, and during my sojourn in the city famous for its nuts—which, by-the-bye, I never once saw—it was my intention to follow to the letter the time-honoured precept. But at the fag end of my somewhat extended holiday, a circumstance transpired that promised to infringe, for once, upon the rule which I had hitherto rigidly abided by.

This was partly due to a strange and—in Spanish annals—an unheard of announcement that a "real" British ballet was coming to the Peninsular, and would open at the Teatro del Circo of Barcelona.

English dancers for Spain! That sounded as surprising and

inconsistent in its way, as oranges for Seville, cutlery for Sheffield, or coals for Newcastle. The managerial policy of such an enterprise might well be questioned, and empty benches similarly predicted; for one naturally looks to Spain and to France for dancers, as one does to Italy for vocalists, and to Great Britain for acrobats and clowns. There is as little faith in English dancing as there is in her singing, and so conscious are we ourselves of this, that even a *première* of high pretensions, born in the purlieus of Pimlico, will not be tolerated till her Anglo-Saxon appellation has been exchanged for a foreign one. Well might one apply a paraphrase of the proverb by saying, give a danseuse a good name and you may engage her.

Evidently Senor Moragas was of a different way of thinking when he conceived the idea of importing a company of English dancers to his native land. And Senor Moragas should have known something about it, as he was *primo ballerino* at a time when the famous Spanish *première*, Perea Nena, astonished and delighted London audiences by her graceful gyrations at the "old" Haymarket.

During my visit to Barcelona, I became acquainted with a brother of Senor Moragas, who was a painter by profession, and it was through him that I was made aware of the actual arrival of my compatriots with their impressario. It was also through the artist-brother that I learned that the manager was in want of an interpreter, one who could turn English into Spanish at a moment's notice, and the latter language into Anglo-Saxon with the same facility.

Now it is one of the polite customs of old Castille to place at your friends' disposal everything you possess, or anything that your friend may be in need of. He is not bound to accept your offer whether this be a sentiment or a sum of money, while, as a general rule, he regards the tendered gift as a well-meant compliment, and, upon that score, he declines with thanks. But, in the present instance when my friend proposed that I myself should undertake the office of interpreter to the ballet, he took me at my word when I responded, with some degree of hesitation be it said, that I should be most happy.

I hesitated because my experience of ballets had been hitherto strictly confined to my observations of them from the "front," or auditorium of a theatre. Not that I supposed the duties would be very arduous, or would necessitate much practice, as I had always cherished the belief, founded upon the evidence of sight, that the

language of the dancer was not dissimilar to that of a deaf mute, inasmuch as the poetry of motion is all gesticulation and dumb show. A ballet behind the scenes might, however, be a different sort of thing to a ballet in full blaze of the footlights and, as likely as not, Terpsichore off the stage was talkative.

I was not afraid of that either, as although I had for some time past devoted my attention to the local lingo, I had not yet forgotten my mother-tongue as it is spoken in the neighbourhood of Bayswater and Bloomsbury. I therefore yielded without much persuasion to my friend's solicitations, and being a young bachelor far from his respected family, without a wife to consult or a mother-in-law to consider, it was not long before I became personally acquainted with the entire corps, leading ladies and all.

There were sixteen of them all told, unless we include a few elderly females who acted as their chaperones and "dressers," and with one exception they were lodged and boarded in a big dwelling in the Calle del Asalto—a street with an ominous sound; Asalto being Spanish for attack, or invasion. The odd girl out was a youthful and remarkably pretty creature whom they all called Emily, and she had been consigned to the care of Her Majesty's British Consul and his lady; a very worthy and highly-respected couple, personally known to me as they also were to Emily's relatives at home.

I have no hesitation in publishing these particulars, as beyond the stigma usually attached to the reputation of ballet-girls in general, the protecting wing and hospitality of the British Consulate was nothing to be ashamed of. And I may here take occasion to mention for the benefit of disbelievers in the respectability of ballet-girls as a whole, that the ladies whom Senor Moragas had imported to his native place, belonged to a superior order, and exhibited a certain refinement of manner and speech, combined by a steadiness of conduct peculiar to persons who have been well brought up and fairly educated.

Most of them were what is commonly called "lively," and a few were what might equally be termed "frivolous"; but it was the liveliness and frivolity of school-girls, or people out for a holiday, rather than that which is usually looked for from persons of their class. They were, moreover, quite young; two or three among them being scarcely turned sixteen; and they were more or less comely; while, with few exceptions, their personal attractions were unaided

by the art which improves but sometimes destroys. Indeed, a better-looking, better-behaved ballet has rarely, if ever, been seen either off the stage, or upon it.

They were described in print as English blondes, and referred to as the "pick" of London play-houses, and public expectation in both respects was not disappointed upon the night of the representation; but I had good reason to know that these reports were not in every case strictly accurate, as more than one of the troupe was a decided brunette, with dark eyes and brown hair of a deep shade, while at least a third were mere novices of the stage, and hailed from the provinces. However, all is fair on the stage, as in war, and accordingly the members of that company acting up to this principle in a practical way did not belie public rumour.

Much also was made of the ladies' names, which, though common-place to an English ear, had a high-sounding flavour for a foreigner, just as Miss Green or Miss White converted into Dona Verde or Senorita de Blanco might have for the denizens of Drury Lane. I cannot at this distant period recall any of their family titles, though—as will presently be seen—I had good reason at the time for having some of them well-impressed on my memory; but I recollect there was a Margaret, an Emilia, and a Maria; two Lizzies, one Amy, and a single Sophia, besides the Emily who was quartered at the British Consulate.

If I remember aright, Margaret was a tall, dark beauty, and neo of the Lizzies was rather short, with a fair delicate complexion of nature's providing, soft blue eyes and curly locks of a carroty shade. Maria was a vivacious, bright-eyed little thing, and sang very sweetly when she was asked to do so, and felt in the humour; while Emily was equally expert on the piano, as I was told Sophia also was. Senor Moragas had certainly exercised great judgment and care in his selection, as a more accomplished and comely set of damsels were never beheld out of a harem.

As far as personal appearance was concerned, this was likewise the opinion of the Barcelona public, for on the opening night, which took place on the 28th of October, 1862, there was a perfect *furore* when the curtain rose upon "Apolo en el Jardin de Terpsicore" (Apollo in Terpsichore's garden), and displayed the entire strength of the company arranged pyramid-wise, and in graceful poses, upon "bridges" which reached from stage to flies, and extended from the prompt-side to the opposite wing; the apex being

formed by a young Spanish dancer who acted as *première danseuse* to the company.

Long before this interesting spectacle was witnessed, however, the public were favoured with passing glimpses of the "Biondas Inglesas," as some of them were out shopping by day in small detachments of three and four. It was on such occasions as these that my services were mostly required, as I had been deputed to "personally conduct" all out-of-door expeditions of the kind.

It was at such times also that I discovered that the duties of an interpreter to a ballet were not as easily performed as I was led to imagine. For my countrywomen expressed their wants much as they would do in the shops of the Strand or Bow-street, Covent-garden, and their demands in the way of dress, ornament, and perfumery being more often than not, foreign to my own comprehension, it was sometimes impossible to make them known to the not over-intelligent native.

My companions had, moreover, a way of openly expressing their sentiments of any shopkeeper who did not, or could not understand the precise nature of their requirements, in a manner difficult, and sometimes dangerous to render into corresponding Castilian. Thus when eau de Cologne was asked for in syllables, which made it sound orderkerlone, the request was received by the shopkeeper with a shrug, while the shrug was equally met by the expression, "Fool," as applied to a Catalonian tradesman who, though ignorant of Anglo-Saxon, was at least expected to know something of the language of Gaul. The same thing happened when Sarsaparilla was required; but the vendor of that cosmopolitan remedy was accustomed to hear it pronounced tharthapareéya, so when sasseyperiller was mentioned, he shook his head sadly, and morally gave it up.

"Hopeless idiot" and "stupid donkey" were among the mildest epithets levelled at the heads of the perplexed Peninsularists; the abuse being sometimes accompanied by the harmless chaff peculiar to light-hearted ladies of a lively turn; but the object of the remarks being wholly unconversant with the language of Perfidious Albion, merely smiled, looked pleasant, and asked in his native tongue, what was the next article, miss, please.

It is worthy of remark that these free and independent daughters of Great Britain and—in one case—Ireland were profoundly indifferent to the manners and customs of old Castille, and it was

perhaps for this reason that they would often cross the gay and fashionable promenade of the Rambla, in broad daylight, armed with purchases in the form of parcels, bottles, and provisions utterly unmindful, or regardless of the circumstance that the critical eye of the *élite* was upon them, and that it was not considered good form in that ceremonious land for a lady to be seen bearing in public anything that was not a fan, a mantilla, a rosary, or a sunshade.

But the ladies from Lambeth and Ball's Pond, Islington, cared little in Spain for public opinion off the stage, and had no sort of respect either for Spanish etiquette or for Spaniards as a race. Why they should have entertained a dislike to the good people of the Peninsular, was not easily explained, and was, to say the least of it, uncalled for, inasmuch as the native "masher," or "pollo," as he is there denominated, when brought into personal contact with the members of that troupe, as was sometimes the case, invariably treated them with the utmost politeness and gallantry. For all that, the blondes from Britain seemed to regard every well-dressed Spaniard as a contrabandista in disguise, or a respectable brigand who, upon the slightest provocation, and without notice, would be ready with a stiletto, a "navaja," or any weapon of the kind that might be concealed within the ample folds of his melo-dramatic mantle.

Though on this account, and because only a limited number were familiar with "zee Eengleesh as he is spoke," the privileged few who were admitted to their presence received little or no encouragement from my compatriots, the ladies themselves received the greatest possible encouragement from the privileged few, as they also did from other frequenters of the theatre. This is evident from the fact that the Teatro del Circo was every night filled to overflowing from "lunetas" or stalls to "gallinera" or gallery, and from "platea" or pit to "Circulares," a locality which in Spain corresponds to our dress-circle.

The audience were never tired of gazing at my countrywomen as they appeared in the brightest, most becoming, and scantiest of dresses, and expressed their approval by repeated plaudits and costly presents in the shape of floral wreaths and bouquets in which were often concealed jewellery, or other articles of value; but with the exception of the Spanish *première*, it must be confessed there

was little or nothing in the gyrations to call for the special admiration of critical spectators well used to the best examples of the light fantastic. The motive of "Apolo en el jardin de Terpsicore" was, however, well-chosen, and this, combined by the fairy-like appearance of the blondes, and the excellent dancing of the *première*, was sufficient to render the performances an unqualified success, and to cause many of the audience to leave their places before the curtain rose again for "Los dos preceptores," a favourite three-act comedy which followed the divertissement, and was performed by popular Spanish actors.

It formed part of my duties as interpreter to attend every night at the theatre, as my linguistic services were frequently required at the wings, or wheresoever duty called me. Occasionally duty called very loud, and sometimes in chorus, and thus it happened that my name would be shouted by various voices from various unseen localities, as if they belonged to maidens of old in want of a knight-errant. This was, of course, in strict keeping with the best traditions of old Castille; but the romance of the situation disappeared when the cause of the hasty summons had reference to a dispute in dumb-show between the damsel in distress and the stage-carpenter, the property-man or other employée of Thespis; while more often than not I was requested by the nymph in need to tell "this raving lunatic," or to ask "that demented duffer" something which the sylph or her slave had vainly endeavoured to express.

My official duties on behalf of the ballet ended when the company set sail for Madrid, which was their next professional halting place; but my mission was not yet complete, as it still remained for me to fulfil one other obligation, which, inasmuch as it refers to the interpretation of human sentiments, may be regarded as appertaining to my office. In other words, I was entrusted by several members of the troupe with various presents and verbal messages for such of their respective families who resided in the Great Metropolis whither I myself was shortly bound.

Some of them sent to their distant relations monetary tokens, in the shape of sovereigns, which varied in amounts from two to four pounds in good English coin of the realm—being portions of the somewhat high salaries which these ladies received—while in each package consigned to my care were included a few choice souvenirs purchased at the native shops. Every package was duly

addressed, and was accompanied by the sender's good wishes and expressions of foreign felicity, and all these it behoved me to deliver and distribute upon my arrival in London.

That I acquitted myself with credit will be acknowledged when it is stated that this singular commission occupied me the best part of a fortnight, as most of the mothers, sisters, or aunts of the absent ones resided at remote localities, and, as a general rule, were out when I called. I may also mention that I was somewhat out of pocket by the transaction, as there was something to pay at the Custom House and in cab hire, too.

What became of Margaret and Maria, of Amy and Emily, of Sophia, Emilia, the two Lizzies, and the rest, I was never able to ascertain, nor have I to this day met since any one of them, unless by accident, or without knowing it, from my place in the stalls. For all I can tell, Margaret may have changed her mind in Madrid and accepted the matrimonial offer of a local hidalgo, and Sophia has similarly allied herself to a fruit merchant of Seville; while it is equally on the cards that one and all are matronly mothers, retired from the stage and its lime-light allurements.

But whatever may have happened to the ballet, individually or collectively, the writer of these lines wishes them well and God-speed; while, as long as "this machine is to him," he will not easily forget his experiences in Spain of the manners and customs of Lambeth, Ball's Pond, and Newington Green.

The Faust Legends.

By H. Savile Clarke.

"This *Faust* is as a mystic Oracle for the mind; a Dodona grove, where the oaks and fountains prophesy to us of our destiny, and murmur unearthly secrets."—Carlyle.

THE announcement that the most poetical dramatist of our day is going to provide the most popular actor and actress with yet another stage version of the legend of Faust, of Mephistopheles and Margaret, may render a few desultory notes upon this immortal legend not without interest to the playgoer who purposes seeing Mr. Irving's next production at the Lyceum.

To reach the origin of this fascinating story we must go back beyond the Dr. Faustus of the sixteenth century, and we may dismiss once and for all the myth of the monks, who fathered the tricks of that gentleman upon John Fust, the printer, in revenge for his abominable invention which did away with the art of illumination and the copying of manuscripts, not to mention a few little superstitions that obscured the truth in the Middle ages. The basis of the story of Faust is, of course, the belief in the existence of formal contracts between man and the Prince of Darkness, concerning which there are scores of legends. And it is curious that in old times the devil is very often reported as being outwitted and getting the worst of it, though possibly in later days his Satanic Majesty has turned the tables upon us. Mr. Dasent tells us that this notion of making unholy bargains was first heard of in the middle of the thirteenth century, and came from the East with Christianity. He considers the original of all the Faust legends to be the strange story of one Theophilus, who was *vice-dominus*, next in rank to a bishop, in a city of Cilicia in the reign of the first Justinian. This Theophilus was more fortunate than some people who were said afterwards to make compacts with Satan, for the Devil evidently did not possess a proper deed-

box, and the priest getting his document back promptly burned it, and in due time received pardon. It is interesting in connection with this personage to remember that Mr. Gilbert in his version of the Faust story, entitled "Gretchen," made his hero a priest, and not a student or magician, as in other plays on the subject. The original Faust, however, who figures in the great mass of legends, appears to have been a real individual, one Faustus (or fortunate), whose adventures were related by Begardi, a physician, in 1539, who is mentioned by Gastius, a theologian, as among the examples of the power of the Devil a few years afterwards, while testimony to his existence is borne by no less a person than the reformer Melancthon, whose account is given by his disciple Manlius, and in it Faustus is rather unkindly called an abominable beast and "*Cloaca multorum diabolorum.*" Other contemporary testimony as to Faust's existence is given by German authors, which need not be quoted here, and the whole, says Mr. Bird, one of the translators of Goethe's poem, is "amply sufficient to establish beyond doubt the fact of Faust's real existence, as well as the general character of his life and doings." This, too, leaves out the testimony of the frescoes in Auerbach's cellar at Leipsic, which have been frequently restored, while it is extremely doubtful that the originals were painted by a contemporary.

What kind of a man, then, was this Johan Faust, or Faustus, whose story is, as Mr. Hayward says, of almost universal diffusion, "giving birth to numerous fictions, some of a high order of poetical merit?" Great poets and small poets have dealt with it; it has furnished the subject for plays, harlequinades, operas, and songs, and seems likely, if we may judge from the experience of the past and present generations, to be drawn upon for many years to come as eminently suited to dramatic representation.

Faust or Faustus—the name was said to have been given to a magician, "*ob faustum in rebus peractu difficillimis successum*"—was born at Kundlingen, in Wurtemberg, about the end of the fifteenth century. He studied physic, which in those days included a good deal which would not be recognised by the faculty now, at the University of Cracow, and took his degree as Doctor of Medicine. He learned magic, too, which, as Mr. Hayward says, "naturally led to an aquaintance with the devil," and he very soon entered into a formal compact with the Father of Evil. That is given in Marlow's "Faustus," and a very curious French version exists in

which "*Jean Faust, Docteur,*" makes an agreement with Mephistopheles, "*qui est valet du prince infernal en Orient,*" and, after stating the conditions, it goes on, "*Pour plus grande certitude, et plus grande confirmation, j'ai écrit la présente promesse de ma propre main, et l'ai sous-écrit de mon propre sang, que je me suis tiré expressément pour ce faire.*" It may be noted here that in a puppet-play which Dr. Franz Horn saw in 1807, the blood flowing from a vein in Faust's hand was made to form the letters H. F. (*Homo, fuge*), and a guardian angel appeared, but without any effect. The contract having been duly signed and delivered, Satan appears to have given Faust an attendant imp in the form of a black dog (which we find in Goethe's poem), with whom he went out into the world, meeting with many wonderful adventures, and playing a thousand mad tricks upon people. "Shortly," says Görres, "Faustus appeared conspicuous in history as the common representative of mischievous magicians, guilty of all kinds of *diablerie*. Their sins, throughout centuries, were all laid at his door," since he was a man who travelled much, and "had boasted of his infernal connections and influence in the nether lands." Faust seems to have gone about as a travelling scholar in a magic mantle, leading the life of a vagabond, and we hear of him at Ingoldstadt, Prague, Leipsic, Wittenberg, and other places; while he had a disciple named Wagner, the son of a clergyman, at Wasserberg, upon whom fell some of the magical fame of his master. Mr. Hayward disposes of what he calls a very injurious insinuation made by Mr. Carlyle regarding Faust. That writer says: "About 1560, his term of thaumaturgy being over, he disappeared, whether under a feigned name, by the rope of some hangman, or frightfully torn in pieces by the devil near the village of Rimlich between twelve and one in the morning, let every reader judge for himself." Mr. Hayward says there is no authority for that statement; but Carlyle hardly makes it seriously, and he took it from several volumes founded on the first "Faust-Buch," published in 1587 at Frankfort by John Spies. That was translated by a Mr. Gent a few years afterwards, and reprinted by Mr. Thoms in his "Early English Prose Romances," and in it we find Faust stating that he knows the Devil will have his body, and an account of his terrible end at Rimlich.

This extraordinary fable spread with marvellous rapidity through France, Italy, Spain, England, Holland, and Poland, and, in fact,

the mass of literature concerning Faust is overwhelming; a mere catalogue of the titles of the books would fill many pages. The earliest work dealing with the legend is that referred to above by John Spies, entitled, "The History of Dr. John Faust, the Notorious Sorcerer and Black Artist," &c., and it is evidently intended as an antidote to the belief in necromancy which existed in those days. The volume is certainly an extraordinary rigmarole. Faust studies magic, raises the Devil, and signs the compact with him in the orthodox and sanguinary manner, and then plays innumerable pranks with his boon companion, Wagner, aided, of course, by Satan. There is a great deal of Scripture quoted, and many arguments on theological matters which are extremely dull, but in the second part the narrative becomes a little more lively. Faust, not being content with "Mephostophiles," as he is here called, who is represented as only a sort of second fiddle in the world of devils, interviews Belial, Beelzebub, Astaroth, Satan, Anubis, and a whole troop of devils, who go through a variety of performances, much to his edification. Then Faust by magical means is taken on his travels, Mephostophiles showing him all over the world, visiting the Pope (concerning whose luxurious living some hard things are said), an immense number of German towns, and also Constantinople, where his necromantic tricks frighten the Sultan nearly out of his wits. The third part of the story of Faust's adventure was probably the most amusing of all to those who read it when it first appeared, for it is mainly a collection of stories about the magician and the miraculous feats he performed, especially at the Court of Charles V. Many of these tales evidently related, as German critics have pointed out, to others necromancers, but were fathered on Faust as a popular character, just as scores of jokes he never made are attributed to Sheridan. In the end, Faust is torn to pieces by the Evil One, as quoted by Carlyle, and so ends what the author calls the true history of Dr. Faust, a solemn warning to the good people of the period not to have dealings with the Devil.

This work was, undoubtedly, very popular, for it was translated into Low German, Danish, Dutch, French, and, as we have seen, into English, and a version in rhyme, considerably altered, published in Germany, was the foundation of an English ballad on the subject. Moreover, an enlarged version was published in Hamburg in 1599 by G. R. Widman, which contained much extra

matter, and an interminable series of commentaries on the various chapters, for the most part of a religious character, some of them accusing several of the Popes of having practised the Black Art. Considerably more than a hundred works relating to the history of Faust have been catalogued by Dr. Stieglitz as having been published in Germany, while there are about a score of poems and dramas. And it is noteworthy that no less than twenty-nine authors dealt with the story during the time spent by Goethe in finishing the two parts of his Faust.

One form of the German version, the "Puppenspiel" or Puppet-Play, deserves special mention as it was that in which Goethe in childhood made acquaintance with the story of Faust, that, as he says in his autobiography, "sounded and hummed through him many-toned again in early youth." Mr. Bayard Taylor mentions the Faust "Puppenspiel" as being in existence in the latter part of the 17th century. Dr. Stieglitz also mentions several of them, and Dr. Franz Horn gives an account of a representation of one he witnessed in 1807, which is translated by Mr. Hayward. A Faust Puppet Play found a permanent home, Mr. Bird tells us, in Potsdam in 1824, and those curious in such matters will find an excellent description of the "Puppenspiel" in the preface to his translation of Faust. It is curious that the German critic, Düntzer, considers that the play of our countryman, Marlowe, was not without influence on the German Puppenspiel.

It may be questioned, however, whether the Faust legend would have retained its hold upon the imagination of mankind, had it not been that it was adopted by Goethe as the foundation of his deathless poem. His genius which made it yield fresh beauties gave it new life, and its name will be remembered for ever in connection with that of the great German who takes rank with the foremost poets of the world, with Homer and Œschylus, with Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare. There is no need to describe Goethe's "Faust." It is accessible to English readers, who do not know German, in a score of translations. Mr. Hayward's prose one will give the student the clearest idea of the meaning of the poem, and Dr. Auster's is, perhaps, the best rhymed version, but no poetic rendering in another language can possibly do justice to the great original; the spirit, as Shelley well said, escapes in the crucible of translation. Even such a poet as himself failed when he attempted a fragment of it, and though his translation of the "Prologue in

Heaven" has merits, it has been over-praised. The first stanza runs as follows :—

RAPHAEL.

"The sun makes music as of old
Amid the rival spheres of heaven,
On its predestined circle rolled
With thunder-speed—the angels even
Draw strength from gazing on its glance,
Though none its meaning fathom may.
The world's unwithered countenance
Is bright as at Creation's day."

To say nothing of minor points the inversion "fathom may" is very clumsy, and one savage critic declared that the interpolated word "even" was enough to sink the whole version down into Tartarus. Here is the prose version by Mr. Hayward. "*Raphael.* The sun chimes in, as ever, with the emulous music of his brother spheres, and performs his prescribed journey with thunder-speed. His aspect gives strength to the angels, though none can fathom him. Thy inconceivably sublime works are glorious as on the first day."

Dr. Anster's version of this prologue is very feeble, while a fairly adequate reproduction in rhyme of this special passage is given by Mr. J. A. Birds. Here is the stanza in the matchless original :

Die Sonne tönt nach alter Weise
In Brudersphären Wettgesang,
Und ihre vorgeschriebene Reise
Vollendet sie mit Donnergang.
Ihr Anblick giebt den Engeln stärke,
Wen Keiner sie ergründen mag ;
Die unbegreiflich hohen Werke
Sind herrlich, wie am ersten Tag.

There is no occasion to tell the story of Goethe's "Faust;" the reader who does not know it should lose no time in turning to the original or a good translation. But, in justice to Shelley, and as an admirable specimen of the poem, we will quote his beautiful translation of a passage in the Walpurgis Night scene on the Hartz mountains. Mephistopheles has bidden Faust note "How Mammon glows among the mountains," and he answers :—

"Ay—
And strangely through the solid depth below
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
Of mountains, lighting hitherward ; there, rise
Pillars of smoke ; here, clouds float gently by ;
Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,
Or the illumined dust of golden flowers ;

And now it glides like tender colours spreading ;
And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth ;
And now it winds one torrent of broad light
Through the far valley with a hundred veins ;
And now once more within that narrow corner
Masses itself into intensest splendour ;
And near us see sparks spring out of the ground,
Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness ;
The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
That hems us in are kindled."

It would be ludicrous presumption to add anything to the many criticisms that have been passed upon Goethe's "Faust," but it may not be uninteresting to quote one or two by competent men. Here is a fine panegyric pronounced upon the work by Professor Wilson in the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," and no more brilliant or sympathetic critic ever wrote on poetry. He attributes the opinions to the Germans, but, of course, they are his own. "It is declared by all great and true German scholars that the poem of Faust in execution is as perfect as in conception magnificent, and that Goethe has brought to bear on that wonderful work not only all the creative energy of a rare genius, and all the soul-searching wisdom of a high philosophy, but likewise all the skill of a consummate artist, and all possible knowledge and power over his native speech. His was the unconfined inspiration from above, that involuntary moves harmonious numbers; and his the regulated enthusiasm from below, that enables the poet to interfuse with the forms of earth the fire of heaven." Strauss in "The Old Faith and the New," thus expresses German feeling regarding the poem. The translation is by Mr. Blind. "*Faust*," he says, "is our central poem, arisen from the utmost individuality of German thought—the grandest, most complete attempt to poetically solve the enigma of life and of the universe—a poem whose like does not exist, for the profundity and wealth of its ideas bodied forth in pictures full of an indescribable charm and pulsation of life." To turn again to a critic of our own country we find Carlyle declaring: "*Faust* is emphatically a work of Art; a work matured in the mysterious depths of a vast and powerful mind; and bodied forth with that truth, and curious felicity of composition, in which this man is generally admitted to have no living rival."

One other German play on the legend deserves a few words of notice. Klingemann's "Faust" is an elaborate drama, which Carlyle says he had never seen, and somewhat unfairly adds that he had "only heard of it as of a tawdry and hollow article, suited

for immediate use and immediate oblivion." A more careful critic writing in 1823 pronounces it highly dramatic, holds that it shows considerable knowledge of stage effect, and speaks of its "overpowering hurry of supernatural incident and natural emotion" by which the audience are completely carried away. This is, perhaps, over-strained eulogy, for though the drama undoubtedly possesses enough action, some of it of a rather violent and wholly unnatural character, the dialogue is for the most part common-place, only rising here and there into poetry. Faust in this play is introduced to us as a happy married man, with a pretty and pious wife Katha, and a blind old father-in-law Diether. He is a printer, and it is evident that Klingemann had in his mind rather John Fust, of Mayence, than Dr. Faustus, though his hero is also an inventor, and deals in magic. The dramatist appears, in fact, to have made the two characters into one. Faust is disappointed at his want of success. He says:—

"The Emperor Max
Drains his exchequer for the Turkish wars,
While Arts and Sciences are thrust aside,
Like starveling beggars at the gate. For me,
With mine invention here of printed books,
I rank amid the heretics. The monks
Scream loudly from their dark conventual cells,
That I am pilfering from their greedy mouths
The wine that they by writing else had earned:
Nay more, by printing mortals will be taught
To read and know the truth."

Wagner, the friend, is also introduced into this play in which Faust bargains with the Fiend, signs with his blood, is baptised with fire, and gains much unholy wealth. After various adventures, one of which towards the end of the play is very weird, the discovery of a skeleton instead of a beautiful woman, he is at last claimed by the Evil One, and the drama concludes. Another German named *Maler* or "Painter" Muller, an artist, wrote an uncompleted drama on the subject which preceded Goethe's. It is not the best of his works, Carlyle says, and the plot turns upon a wager made by Lucifer with Mephistopheles, that the latter cannot find a really good man upon the earth. Lessing also left a fragment of a drama on the Faust Legend, which was translated by the Earl of Ellesmere, and is remarkable as containing a Prologue in Hell, which made Madame de Stael conjecture that Goethe's Prologue in Heaven was suggested by it.

It may be, perhaps, considered presumption by some people

for any modern dramatists to attempt to deal with a subject consecrated by the genius of Goethe; but their excuse must be the fascination of the story, and they may also plead the fact that with all its poetry and its power the Faust of Goethe is not an acting play. It had to be adapted to the German stage by Tieck; his version is a stock-piece in Germany, and even then there was much difference of opinion as to its fitness for representation on the boards. The eminent critic, Von Schlegel, pronounced definitely against it. Goethe's work he says, "purposely runs out in all directions beyond the dimensions of the theatre." The action often stands still and the soliloquies are too long, and the author "makes frequent demands on the imagination of his readers; nay, he compels them, by way of background for his flying groups, to supply immense movable pictures, and such as no theatrical art is capable of bringing before the eye. To represent the "Faustus" of Goethe we must possess Faustus' magical staff and his formulæ of conjuration." We need not concern ourselves here with other German plays, but may briefly notice the chief versions of the story which have been supplied to the English stage. The list, it may be said, does not profess to be exhaustive.

Marlowe's Tragical History of "The Life and Death of Dr. Faustus." Acted by the Lord Admiral's servants in 1594. Earliest edition published in 1604.

"Life and Death of Dr. Faustus," with the Humours of Harlequin and Scaramouch. Farce by W. Mountfort. Acted at the Queen's Theatre in Dorset Gardens, and revived at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Published 1697. This was the actor who was assassinated by Captain Hill and Lord Mohun.

"The Necromancer; or, Harlequin Dr. Faustus" Pantomime. Acted at Lincoln's Inn Fields, 8vo., 1723-1724.

"Harlequin Dr. Faustus," with the Masques of the Deities. Produced at Drury Lane in 1724. Published Oct. 1724 by Thurmond, a dancing master. Pantomime "Harlequin Dr. Faustus," 1766; a revival of the foregoing with alterations, by Woodward.

"Harlequin Dr. Faustus; or, the Devil will have his Own" Pantomime, 1793.

"Faustus," afterwards called "The Devil and Dr. Faustus," a romantic musical drama, by Soane and Terry. Produced at Drury Lane, May 16, 1825. Wallack played Faust and Terry Mephistopheles. This was an indifferent piece which adhered very

little to the original story, and much of the action was laid in Italy.

"Faust and Marguerite," a romantic drama, in three acts, translated from the French of Michel Carré by W. Robertson. Produced at the Princess's Theatre in 1852. Mr. Charles Kean was the Mephistopheles, Mr. David Fisher Faust, and Miss Carlotta Leclercq Marguerite. The French version from which the above was taken was first produced at the Théâtre du Gymnase Dramatique in 1850, with a cast that included MM. Bressant and Lesuer and Madame Rose Cheri. The play, which is an adaptation of Goethe's work, is somewhat roughly written, and would hardly suit the taste of to-day.

"Faust," a romantic play in four acts, adapted from the German of Goethe by Bayle Bernard. Produced at Drury Lane, October 20, 1866.

"Gretchen," by W. S. Gilbert, in four acts. Produced at the Olympic Theatre, March 24, 1879.

The story of Faust has also formed the groundwork of operas in German and French, and Gounod's work is familiar to all of us, while it forms the subject of innumerable ballets and extravaganzas.

Three of the plays in the above list deserve a few words of further description.

"Marlowe's Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus" is well known to English readers. In it the hero studies magic, and sells himself to the Devil for twenty-four years of enjoyment, visits various cities in company with "Mephostophilis," as his familiar spirit is here called, plays all sorts of tricks, and is finally claimed and carried off by the Evil One. The drama is a curious mixture of really fine writing and dramatic situations, with low buffoonery and much that is silly and grotesque. There is a passage, however, which deserves Ben Jonson's encomium on "Marlowe's mighty line." "Mephostophilis" has called up for Faustus, Helen of Troy, and he thus addresses her:—

"Was this the face that launcht a thousand ships,
And burn'd the toplesse towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen! make me immortall with a kiss;
Her lips sucke forth my soule—see! where it flies;
Come, Helen, come, give me my soule againe.
Here will I dwell for Heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
O! Thou art fairer than the evening ayre,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand starres;

Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,
When he appear'd to haplesse Semele !
More lovely than the Monarch of the skye
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms,
And none but Thou shalt be my Paramour."

Geneste considers that Marlowe has "drawn the character of Faustus with the hand of a master and has written many passages very finely," and he commends Mountfort for judiciously representing the story as farcical, whereas he thinks Marlowe's play is a strange one, as he represents all that happens to Faustus as matter of fact. One editor of this play observes that "the fury and madness of despair as depicted in the last scene is not perhaps exceeded in the language," and he says that Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, used to act Faustus.

The version of "Faust," avowedly an adaptation from Goethe, made by Mr. Bayle Bernard, is in blank verse, of a somewhat prosaic character, and follows the original pretty closely. The following lines will serve a specimen. Faust, it should be said, has longed for death, and Mephistopheles thus answers him :—

"And this is all—
Thou ow'st Philosophy ? She has taught thee
Nothing but her own deceit ! Again, I say
Renounce this solitude, this living tomb,
Where thoughts and juices stagnate with inertness
And stir yourself with pleasurable action.
Cease this false sport, this playing with your griefs—
The vultures ever feeding on the heart,
And seek true pastime—seek it among men,
Their worst companionship still leaves you man.
Mine's not the best, I rank not with the great ones ;
Still, if you are pleased to accept of my poor
Science, I'll be your comrade—if you wish, your slave."

Mr. Phelps was Mephistopheles, Mr. Edmund Phelps, Faust, and Mrs. Herman Vezin played Margaret.

Mr. Gilbert's "Gretchen" is one of the most poetical plays he has ever written, and he deals with the legend with so much originality that the piece owes comparatively little to its predecessors here or in Germany. His hero, Faustus, is a gallant young gentleman, who, disgusted with the faithlessness of women, has taken refuge in the Cloister. His soldier friend, Gottfried, comes to him, and the remembrance of his old life proves so attractive that when his comrade goes off to the wars he soliloquises thus :—

"He's gone ! gone forth to the fair, fruitful world ;
The world of life and love, the world of hope,

Of open hearts and unchecked sympathies ;
O ! foolish priest, misleading and misled,
Poor trickster, ever duping, ever duped,
Cheating thyself into a mad surrender
Of all that youth holds dearest ; cheating others
Into blind trust of thy sincerity ;
Thou art a man—the world was made for man,
Thou hast a heart—thy heart is idle here.
A curse on all this maddening mummery,
This life-long lie, this living catacomb ;
Earth, Heaven, Hell, whichever hears me now,
Come to my call and bring me back to life."

Mephistopheles appears, and drawing an entrancing picture of Gretchen offers to set Faustus free from his priestly bonds. The hero says :—

"Set me free
And I will fight thee with the holy aid
Of her pure innocence."

Mephistopheles accepts the challenge, and in the end the maiden falls, and dies in the last act forgiving Faust, who would fain die at the hand of her lover, his friend Gottfried, but is left to his remorse and repentance. The play, which is exceedingly picturesque and contains many powerful and poetical passages, scarcely met with the success it deserved, the usual fate of serious drama in these days of farce and comic opera. Miss Marion Terry enacted Gretchen, Mr. Conway, Faust, and Mr. Archer, Mephistopheles.

Here must end these brief notes on the world-famous legend of "Faust." No one can be more sensible than the writer, of their incompleteness; but they will have answered their purpose if they serve to introduce a single reader to the fascinating story, and the great poem which has given it immortality.

Random Recollections.

By Henry Turner.

THE memorable campaign under Madame Vestris at the Lyceum, which commenced in the autumn of 1846, will still be green in the recollection of elderly playgoers. It was memorable in many respects, not only for the exceptionally strong company with which the season was inaugurated, but also for those charming versions of Madame D'Aulnoy's Fairy Tales, by J. R. Planché, by which it was distinguished. Each of these extravaganzas terminated with a scene of surpassing brilliancy—the work of the renowned William Beverly, which gradually unfolded and developed into fresh marvels—so that these final scenes became the talk of the town. The first instance was in the case of "The Island of Jewels," wherein a gigantic cactus slowly drooped its leaves, disclosing a circle of lovely nymphs, each holding on her head an illuminated jewel. The rival establishments soon followed suit, and for nearly forty years the public have been surfeited with imitations, under the name of transformation scenes, in the various pantomimes—imitations very beautiful, but always meaningless, and frequently merely a vehicle for an enormous expenditure, unaccompanied by the display of any artistic taste. When these imitations first commenced, Madame Vestris was informed by "a candid friend" that a certain theatre had expended on one of these scenes twice the sum which had been incurred at the Lyceum. Madame replied, "Let them use mahogany, I will beat them with a deal board." She knew that the innate taste of a Vestris could not be purchased. The *pièce de résistance* on the opening night was a dramatised version of a French drama, entitled "The Pride of the Market." Madame Vestris was the heroine, Marton, in a picturesque costume of a market woman of Paris in 1700, supported by Buckstone as a jealous comic baker. The elegant Leigh Murray (then only 26) was a most seductive Marquis, and Granby played a small part of a man who was always too late, as his name, Baron

Troptard, sufficiently indicated. I remember reading in the posters: "Mr. Parselle, from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. His first appearance." How I envied Mr. Parselle! He became a very useful actor, and several years ago migrated to the United States, where he died in the spring of the present year. Charles Mathews had already appeared in the opening piece, and Mrs. Stirling played in the concluding one of "The Two Queens." In addition to the above names, Mrs. Fitzwilliam was in the list of the company, as also Mr. Harley. It is almost worth while to have attained the grand climacteric to have seen Harley. A pupil of the renowned Bannister, he was a first-class comedian, full of pompous bustle, and with a humour peculiarly his own. Charles Lamb must have seen him, as he first appeared about 1815, but I do not remember any allusion to him in the Essays of Elia, though he was a player after Charles Lamb's own heart. He was the original Cox in Morton's farce of "Box and Cox." This was produced when the Lyceum campaign was about a year old, viz., in October, 1847. It was really a combination of two French farces, the idea of two individuals occupying the same room simultaneously not being considered a sufficient *motif* for an English audience. Hence the continuation of "Penelope Ann." Every playgoer went to see "Box and Cox." How well I remember witnessing it for the first time! In the Royal box were the Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Coburg. At the back of the box stood Prince Albert, appreciating the fun to the utmost, while occasionally the head of Her Gracious Majesty, the face partially concealed by a handkerchief, would appear, perfectly convulsed with laughter. Box never softened a single point in tone or gesture, but revelled in gag, and walked up the stage in his shirt sleeves, with the different-coloured gusset in his unmentionables, with his customary grand air. The farce was played the Christmas following at Buckingham Palace. The daughter of the clever Mrs. Fitzwilliam made a promising first appearance in a little drama called "Peggy Green," Mathews lending his aid to strengthen the cast. Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam soon became a great favourite through her own personal merits, although her birth was sufficient to ensure her a cordial reception. A thorough musical education, an exceedingly fresh voice, and a charming natural manner, were passports at once to the favour of the public, which she retained till her marriage a few years later. "The Golden Branch" was the first sample of

Planché's Lyceum fairy tales. Madame Vestris, Polly Marshall, Louisa Howard, Miss Fitzwilliam, and Mrs. Macnamara (who, by-the-by, was the original Mrs. Bouncer) figured in the piece. Polly Marshall was a not unsuccessful imitator of Mrs. Keeley. Louisa Howard was a remarkably pretty girl, with a very sweet voice. H. Hall was only second to James Bland as a king of burlesque, and the cast was strengthened by the incomparable Harley. The Lyceum campaign lasted barely nine years. Madame Vestris made her last appearance here on any stage in 1856, in a piece called "Sunshine through the Clouds," one of the versions of "La Joie fait Peur." Her management had been distinguished by the production of several remarkable pieces: "The Rough Diamond," with Buckstone and Mrs. Fitzwilliam in the chief parts, "The Game of Speculation," with Mathews as Affable Hawk—I will not give the number of runs this piece attained, else my readers would not believe in its great success; but runs of five hundred and a thousand nights were unknown in the "fifties." "Not a Bad Judge" was remarkable for the finished impersonation of the Physiognomist, John Caspar Lavater, by Charles Mathews. Harley also was excellent as the fussy Burgomaster. A very pretty little drama, in one act, called "A Romantic Idea," by Planché, served to show the talent of Mr. Roxby (brother to Mr. Beverley) as a weird German postillion. H. Hall and Kathleen Fitzwilliam also scored considerably in some burlesque imitations of the old Coburg melodrama. Mathews as a German tourist was, of course, admirable. "King Charming" was one of the most successful of the extravaganzas Produced in 1851, contemporaneous with the Great Exhibition, it drew immense crowds to the end of the season. The difficulty of selecting the costume of King Charming was settled in a very speedy and effective manner. At this date Prince Jung Bahadoor was in England as the Ambassador from Nepaul. He was visible everywhere during the London season. I saw him leaving Stafford House, and perfectly remember his costume. A pale pink satin tunic embroidered with pearls, Turkish trousers, a turban hat, one mass of pearls, and hung with pendent diamonds, surmounted by a spray of bird-of-paradise feathers. He was a small, elegant man, clean shaven, with good features, and a bronze complexion. Here was the very presentment of King Charming! Madame Vestris copied the dress exactly. On the occasion on which I witnessed the piece Madame Vestris was indisposed, and the char-

acter was sustained by her husband, who wore a similar costume Theatrical managements, like empires, have their rise and fall. By degrees the company at the Lyceum was weeded out, but the saving in salaries was more than balanced by the decline in popularity of this pleasant theatre. On one occasion Mathews found it necessary to raise some money at usurious interest—not for the first time in his career, as is well known. The Shylock stipulated that he should receive sixpence a head on every person who patronised the pit, the admission to which was two shillings, as a mode of repayment. Mathews reflected a moment, then as a bright idea occurred to him, assented to the proposal. The following week the price of admission to the pit was raised to half-a crown. Thus the innocent public cleared off the debt on the co-operative principle. On one occasion the band, when the bell rang for the overture, packed up their instruments and left the theatre. Mathews exerted himself to the utmost, and, in a letter to the public journals, expressed his belief that the audience fully appreciated the absence of the musicians. Then the company went *en masse*, with Edward Wright at their head, to protest against their salaries being in arrear. Wright informed the lessee that the takings during the preceding fortnight had been so much—naming a considerable sum. Mathews opened his eyes in wonder, expressing his surprise. "Really! I was not aware of it. I have seen none of it!" which was probably the fact. There was a private friend, whom we will call Mr. Brown, from whom Mathews had borrowed five hundred pounds. Meeting him by chance, the comedian expressed his regret that he had not yet been able to repay the money. Brown pulled a long face, and, in a despairing tone, replied: "Oh! don't talk of it!" Mathews instantly seized the hand of Brown, and, in his emphatic manner said: "Well, we won't—we won't!" In his examination before the Court of Bankruptcy he asserted that the only time he had for the study of a new part was in the intervals between his consultations with creditors and solicitors, as he drove from one to the other, and that there was a deplorable want of unanimity between the sheriff-officers regarding him. "When Moses wants to lock me up Levi wants to have me out. When Levi wants to lock me up, Moses wants to have me out." I had the following story from the late Mr. Anson. When Mathews was engaged at the Haymarket, the comedian approached the lessee, Benjamin Webster, wearing a very lugubrious expression. The house was very

full, and Mathews was dressed for his part. "Shadrach is below." "What does he want?" "Fifty pounds; suppose you advance me thirty on account of next Saturday?" But Webster was not in a complying humour, and sternly refused. Mathews returned to his visitor, and in an incredibly short time came skipping into the green-room waving some crisp bank notes in triumph. He had not only pacified Shadrach, and obtained time, but procured another advance into the bargain. Then he descended on to the stage as if there were no such evils as debt and creditors in the world. When his conduct under such conditions was stigmatised as heartless, he argued, with considerable point, that he must either portray the careless, happy-go-lucky individuals as the dramatist had painted them, or become a failure as an artist. "Look at him. He likes it," was an unfair taunt from the unthinking spectator, who expected to see Charles Surface with a face as solemn as that of his brother Joseph, because the representative of the thoughtless spendthrift was harassed by debt and duns. Mathews was an admirable letter writer, and could sustain his own in a controversy in a manner which poor Angus Reach found out to his cost. Reach was the dramatic critic for one of the dailies, and in a brief and cursory notice of one of the extravaganzas (I think "The King of the Peacocks") spoke of the scenery as "dingy." Mathews instantly replied with a broadside, in the shape of an extra fly-leaf to the bill of the play. Those were the days when the programme was printed on a large sheet of thin paper of two pages, redolent of lamp-oil and printers' ink, which came off on the fingers and the gloves. Mathews issued a third leaf, on which he appealed to each member of his audience to decide whether the statement that the scenery was "dingy" was true or no—arguing that the question was entirely one of fact, on which every individual was competent to decide. Then came an inuendo that the adverse criticism of Mr. Angus Reach (the name printed in very large type) was probably owing to the refusal by the lessee to produce a little drama of which the critic was the author. This fly-leaf was issued every evening for several weeks, and the contents were thoroughly digested by the numerous audiences during the intervals between the pieces. Angus Reach was the author of several popular works, "Clement Lorimer," a novel, and "Claret and Olives," descriptive of the wine-producing country of the South of France. Eventually his brain gave way, and a benefit

was got up on his behalf, when an amateur pantomime was produced at Drury Lane, entitled "Guy Fawkes." Albert Smith, Holmes, and Joseph Robins figured in the cast, and Royalty extended its patronage to the performance. The success of Joseph Robins as clown was so great that he (unfortunately) adopted the stage as a profession. The promise held out was not fulfilled by subsequent performances, and he died a short time ago in very reduced circumstances. Angus Reach did not long survive the benefit performance. He was very scrupulous as to the correct pronunciation of his name, insisting that it should be spoken as if written "Reack." On one occasion Thackeray handed him a peach, saying, "Have a peack." It is with no wish to detract from the super-eminent abilities of Charles Mathews that I record the fact that he enjoyed the peculiar advantage during the whole of his career of being specially written for by the best dramatists of the day. They sat down to their desks pen in hand, and sketched characters which should embody the rapid, amusing chatter, the restless, mercurial vivacity, for which the comedian was so renowned in private life. So that, master of the words supplied him, he had simply to skip on to the boards, and be *himself*, and the result was a model of perfection, which, as no two men were ever exactly alike, we can never hope to see equalled. How often have I heard the envious amateur and the professional who was "walking about" free of any engagement, assert in the most dogmatic manner that Charles Mathews was not capable of "taking a line" in a country theatre — as theatres in the country were wont to be. On one occasion I almost felt disposed to agree with them. I went with a party of friends to see the elder Morton's old-fashioned comedy, "The Way to Get Married," at the Olympic Theatre, in the year 1868. Tangent, which was the part impersonated by Mathews, should have been in his line, and we all anticipated a great treat. At the close of the last century, Lewis was very famous for his rendering of the character. The result was complete failure, and the unanimous verdict of the party was that at the age of sixty-five perhaps the time had naturally arrived for retirement. The afterpiece was the younger Morton's farce of "If I had a Thousand a Year," written expressly for Mathews. It was a complete transformation. The consensus of opinion was that no living actor could be placed in comparison with the veteran of sixty-five years. Charles

Mathews was not often required to portray deep feeling or emotion, but at the end of the first act of "The Bachelor of Arts" the words occur, "My poor father," on which the act-drop falls. The effect on the audience was the reverse of pathetic. A more signal example of this lack of feeling occurred in a version of "Don Cæsar de Bazan," produced at the Haymarket, wherein Mathews personated the reckless Castilian. At this period, "Dons" were as plentiful as mushrooms after a shower of rain. Each theatre could boast of an imitation of James Wallack's incomparable assumption at the Princess's Theatre. Probably the best of these copies was that of Osbaldiston at a minor theatre. It must be confessed that Mathews built up the character on lines of his own. He sang a song, "That's my Marquesa la Della Rosa," the refrain of which lingers in my memory still. All went well till the final scene, wherein the injured husband has to indulge in some very tall talk, and lecture Maritana on wifely duties. The effect was ludicrous, and the scene was accompanied by subdued tittering all over the house. The mention of the name of James Wallack awakens the regret which I have always felt that I never saw him more than twice in my career of playgoing. The first time was in the "forties," when he played Master Brook in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," at the Princess's, when Maddox ruled the roast. And what a cast! The two wives were Madame Vestris and Mrs. Stirling. It would be difficult to say which presented the most lovely appearance, or which succeeded in carrying out the description of "Merry" the best. It was a competition which should laugh the longest and the heartiest. I can still, in imagination, hear the musical ripples of mirth from the lips of these fascinating women. Mathews was the Welshman, Sir Hugh Evans, and I think Compton was Slender. Granby was a very inferior actor to either Phelps or Creswick, but I preferred his Falstaff to either. The first was too dry, and the second too hard, whereas Granby was unctuous—an indispensable element in the character. The second time I saw James Wallack was in "The Serious Family," as Captain Murphy Maguire. The whole regiment of Captain Maguires must hide their diminished heads in comparison thereof. He was the beau ideal of a cultivated, polished Irish gentleman.

In any account of the Lyceum campaign under Mdme. Vestris, the name of Patty Oliver should not be omitted. Her first appearance was in the year 1850, appearing in a *revue*, the name of which

I have forgotten, *àpropos* of the forthcoming Exhibition. She was, in those days, the best Mary Wurzel in "Used Up" ever seen, not excepting the charming original representative, Julia Bennett. Another *débutante* of note was Miss Julia St. George, who sustained the heroines of the several extravaganzas with much musical taste and skill. Mrs. Boucicault also appeared here prior to her marriage with the great Dion, in conjunction with John Cooper (the original Virginius), in a comedy called "The Lawyers."

The son of the famous Jack Reeve was introduced to the public on these boards, and acted for one or two seasons with considerable success. William Harrison sang as Captain Macheath, and Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam charmed all hearts as Polly, especially in the songs of "Cease Your Funning" and "Oh! Ponder Well." I cannot conclude the notice of the Lyceum campaign better than in the words of a theatrical wig-maker, whom I recently chanced to meet, and who, reverting to the time when I "strutted and fretted my hour" as an amateur, exclaimed:

"Ah! sir, them wos 'appy days."

Our Musical-Box.

DURING the months of September and October votaries of the Divine Arts in these latitudes are mainly dependent upon the great harmonies of Nature for the class of entertainment to which their ears love to listen. Classical music takes a back seat; executants *omnium generum* are holiday-making; the paying public is assimilating ozone, far from the hot reek of concert-rooms and the deafening chatter of musical "at homes," and listening to the deep diapasons growled by the sea, or the *glissando* passages sung by the winds as they sweep over shore and hill-tops. To those who know how to listen, music is never lacking; for it is given out with profusion by things inanimate—I use the term in its conventional sense—as well as animate. Waterfalls drone incessant monotones; telegraphic wires wail dissonantly, like ill-tuned Æolian harps; under the influence of a brisk gale, rows of chimney-pots become gigantic Pandean pipes, "most musical, most melancholy." With respect to the musicality of the lower animals, we are assured by the poet that

> "There's music in the wild goose sitting on a nail,
> There's music in the cat when you tread upon its tail;"

whilst the major third of the cuckoo's call, and the impressive tenth of the donkey's bray are familiar to us all, and have been utilised by Beethoven and Mendelssohn in the composition of immortal tone-pictures. Nature's music is elementary, *sans calembour*; she does not play eight-bar tunes upon the countless instruments at her disposal; but she has suggested musical notions of great beauty and picturesqueness to many a great composer; witness the Pastoral Symphony, the overtures to Fingal's Cave and William Tell, the introduction to Rheingold, and the second act of Siegfried. On the Flemish coast only the other day, during a brief but furious storm that evoked a thousand strident voices from sea and sky, distinct musical tones were sounded by the wind that all the trombones and ophicleides in the world playing in unison, could not have produced with equal force or tenacity of sustention. It was a wind that lifted people off their feet and dashed them against house fronts—that hurled the seething waves high above the sea-wall, and over the broad buff-coloured Digue, overturning the massive metal benches ranged at intervals along that noble promenade, and flecking the ground floor windows of the restaurants and villas with blots of white foam. But it was a musical wind, too, blowing long, hollow notes of incomparable dismalness; I was glad to escape from its voice in an inner chamber of the club, where the accustomed afternoon rubber was in full swing, and a holy calm prevailed.

Si fractus illabatur orbis . . . . what is a tornado outside to a man under cover, with six trumps two honours in his hand?

Ostend is a very pleasant place; never pleasanter than during its off-season, the month of September, when the votaries of fashion and magnates of finance, who put up its prices and throng its Kursaal to suffocation, have completed their tale of sea-baths and returned to their respective *châteaux* or *comptoirs*. It is the only seaside resort with which I am acquainted where good music, thoroughly well performed, is abundant at a peculiarly unmusical time of year, and where the irremediably dull evening that is the *bête noire* of so many modish English watering-places is simply out of the question. Let me explain why this is the case. From seven to nine nightly Perier's orchestra, sixty strong and composed exclusively of first-class executants, plays in the vast hall of the Kursaal—a concert-room capable of accomodating four thousand persons—its performance being of so excellent a quality that every true musician finds matter for rejoicing in them. As soon as this entertainment has been concluded, dancing sets in with extreme vigour in the Kursaal ballroom, and functionaries armed with muffin-bells patrol the streets adjacent to the Digue, prodigal of tinkling intimations to all whom it may concern that the operetta or comedy of the evening is "just a-going to begin" at the "Theatre Royal, Ostend," an establishment situate within a lady's bow shot of the Kursaal, the Société on the Place d'Armes, and all the leading hotels of Flemish Brighton. The pieces generally play from nine till twelve, being broken with long comfortable waits, during which there is ample time to stroll up to the Digue and smoke a cigarette by the moonlit, phosphorescent sea. Mario Widmer, himself an accomplished actor and singer, has leased the pretty little house for several successive seasons past, and has never failed to get together a thoroughly efficient company. During my recent brief stay in Ostend about a dozen comic operas were given quite admirably—amongst them "Niniche," "The Beggar Student," "Kosiki" (a truly charming work, not hitherto produced in London, if I remember aright), "Les Bavards," "Cent Vierges," "Boccaccio," and "Madame Angot." One of the "leading ladies," Mdme. Sohlia Bohrer, would have done credit to the Variétés, as would the "first comic old man," a M. Grésini, who is quite as funny as Baron or Arthur Roberts. After the opera is over, at Ostend, it is the correct thing to gravitate to Noppeney's, the swell confectioner in the Rue de Flandres, and there take in iced liquids through straws, or sip piping-hot supernacular egg-punch, for which Mdme. Noppeney has a recipe of approved merit. You can have oysters and bottled stout, too, at Noppeney's, if you prefer that order of refection to cream-tarts and sherry-cobbler. It is a very gay and expensive place of rendezvous; but everything supplied to you is as good as it can be of its kind, and consequently the establishment is crowded nightly—more especially during the small hours—throughout the season and after-season; that is to say from July 1 to Sept. 30. For a vol-au-vent of shrimps, an oyster pie, or a lobster patty—not to speak of sweet *pasticcerie*

innumerable, pronounced to be perfection by more competent judges than myself—I will back Noppeney against any pastry-cook in Paris, Berlin, or Vienna, justly renowned as are those capitals for their *pâtissiers* and *conditoreien*.

Johann Strauss visited Ostend during the month of August and took up his quarters at No. 13, Digue de Mer, where, as I am assured, he composed the greater part of his new opera, "The Gipsy Baron," to the production of which Vienna is eagerly looking forward. He went punctually through the course of sea-baths prescribed to him, but spent most of his time in his rooms, and rarely put in an appearance at the Kursaal during the afternoon or evening concerts, wishing (as he confessed to a fellow musician who "spotted" him immediately after his arrival) to avoid recognition. The Belgian shopkeepers, however, are an inquisitive folk, and did not fail to put him through his facings whenever, having made purchases in their establishments, he had to give his name and the address to which the objects bought were to be sent. One of these worthies, gifted in his own opinion with an infallible acumen, went so far as to charge the Viennese composer with an audacious, but happily futile, attempt to pass himself off as the genuine Johann Strauss, for whom nobody was in the least likely to mistake him! One day, moreover, as Strauss was dining with his wife at one of the principal *tables-d'hôte* on the Plage, a gentleman sitting near him suddenly asked him: "Are you really John Strauss?" "Certainly I am," replied Strauss. "And it was not your father, then, who composed 'The Beautiful Blue Danube?'" Strauss was not a little astonished at being taken for his own son; the more so, perhaps, because he happens to be childless. Despite all his efforts to maintain his *incognito*, the fact of his presence in Ostend became generally known before he had been a week in the place; and, one evening, having been induced by his better half to enter the Kursaal while the concert was going on, he was recognised by some Austrian and Hungarian acquaintances, who forthwith set up a shout of "Johann Strauss!" that was speedily re-echoed with extraordinary vehemence by the majority of those present. Emile Perier stopped his merrymen in the middle of the selection they were performing, descended from his post at the conductor's desk, seized Strauss by the arm, and hurried him up to the estrade in the huge built orchestra that occupies the centre of the Kursaal. Caught at last, the eminent composer bowed repeatedly to the cheering multitude, which clamoured at the top of its pitch for "Die schoene blaue Donau." Presently, yielding to the wish of the assemblage, Strauss whispered a few words in Perier's ear; a "rapid act" of change took place in the music on the performers' desks; Perier, with a profound obeisance, handed over his *bâton* to Strauss, and the latter, waving it with his well-known preliminary flourish, conducted his *chef d'œuvre* with infinite *verve* and spirit. The applause, as may be imagined, was tremendous. Next morning Strauss left Ostend for Vienna. The gentleman in whose house on the Digue he occupied rooms, is going to have a marble tablet commemorative of that interesting fact let into his brickwork, between the

two windows of the salon in which Strauss spent so many fruitful hours at the piano.

Whilst I was "by the sad sea wave" intelligence reached me of the splendid success achieved by my gifted friend Frau von Hesse-Wartegg (Minnie Hauk) at Prague, where—in the Bohemian National Opera House—she created the *rôle* of Manon in Massenet's opera of the same name. The local papers, some of which reached me at the Kursaal, teemed with accounts of her brilliant acting and admirable singing, which aroused so much enthusiasm in the audience present at the *prémière* that the American prima-donna was called before the curtain no fewer than five-and-twenty times in the course of the evening. The part of Manon cannot but suit her admirably, and I hope we shall some day be privileged to hear her rendering of it in London, where Mdme. Rôze has made it more popular, perhaps, than its intrinsic value entitles it to be. It would be highly interesting to compare the interpretations of two such accomplished artistes, whose voices, methods, and dramatic conceptions differ so widely from one another. Manon will probably take its place in Minnie Hauk's comprehensive *répertoire* between Carmen and Katherine (Taming of the Shrew), in both of which parts I consider her to be unrivalled. It can hardly afford full scope for the display of her great dramatic powers; but, on the other hand, it lends itself gratefully to the display of her elegant and high-finished vocalisation. A more captivating Manon than Marie Rôze the public will never see or hear; but I feel convinced that the tragical *dénouement* of the adventures through which Prévost takes his light-hearted heroine is rendered with extraordinary pathos and impressiveness by Minnie Hauk. No one can doubt this who has witnessed her performances of Elsa and Mignon.

Marie Rôze, by the way, has been scoring fresh triumphs in the provinces ever since the Carl Rosa Company recommenced its annual round of visits to the principal towns of the United Kingdom; but I was grieved to hear during my sojourn in the Low Countries that an attempt had been made to organise a cabal, hostile to this accomplished and hard-working lady, in Dublin. During her last performance of Carmen, it would appear, a highly indecorous demonstration in favour of another member of the company was made, with the manifest purpose of embarrassing and, if possible, discomfiting the French *prima-donna*. This demonstration involved the lowering from the gallery slips to the orchestra of a basket containing a pigeon with some sort of floral garnish, and interrupted the business of the stage for some fifteen minutes, during which the whole house was in a state of uproar and confusion. A member of the band eventually handed the bird to the lady for whom it was intended, who was "on" at the time, and the performance was allowed to continue. The scene has been described to me by eye-witnesses as alarming in the highest degree. A stampede was commenced in the pit when the occupants of that part of the house became aware that some large object was being let down upon their heads by a rope from the gallery, where a group of men

in their shirt-sleeves were "lowering away" amidst the shouts, hisses, and cat-calls of the Dublin roughs. Women, frightened out of their wits, were shrieking loudly, and free fighting was "on hand" that would have done honour to an Irish wake. I am assured that this scandalous *fracas* was got up by persons who are envious of Madame Rôze's well-deserved popularity, and who have for some time past subventioned a hissing claque to persecute her whenever she appears on the stage; that her engagement, as a Frenchwoman in a so-called "English Company" is savagely resented by her colleagues of native birth; and that a steadfast endeavour is being made to compel her to withdraw herself from any further connection with Mr. Rosa's enterprise. If this be so, the contrivers of a plot to drive a popular artist from the stage will assuredly have reason to repent their cowardly machinations; for the genuine public will take the matter into its own hands, in a manner anything but pleasant for all those who may be even suspected of any connection with it. Madame Rôze—putting her unquestionable talents out of the queston—is a faithful, industrious, and conscientious servant of the public, who fulfils her duties with a completeness, punctuality, and good-humour that should serve as a shining example of conduct to those who envy her success, whilst they are forlorn of the qualities that have achieved it. The public, in this country, is grateful to those who entertain it well—above all, to those who never disappoint it—and will not allow such persons to be victimised by petty professional jealousies. The idea of making any artist's nationality a pretext for annoying her or him, as the case may be, is at once absurd and iniquitous. If Madame Rôze, a Frenchwoman, can sing and act better than Englishwomen in the same line of business, the latter must yield precedence to her on the boards and in the theatrical treasury; and the less frequently they draw public attention to their own inferiority to her the more likely they are to secure their fair share of popular favour. Some months ago I had occasion to point out to certain members of the Carl Rosa Company, in the pages of this magazine, that their excessive self-appreciation and exaggerated pretensions, if persisted in, would prove no less injurious to their own interests than to those of the energetic *impresario* who has rescued more than one of them from obscurity, and taught them no small portion of what they know. The warning was a friendly one, and should not have been disregarded. I take this opportunity of renewing it, and of observing, to those whom it may concern, that nothing is more despicable, or more repulsive to English public feeling, than persecution, especially when directed against a woman. On this occasion I refrain from mentioning any of the names which have been brought to my cognizance in connection with the occurrences above referred to; but I shall not hesitate to do so, should they be repeated in the future.

The concert season is on the point of setting in at Berlin with its customary severity. In anticipation of the trials awaiting him, my talented colleague Julian Weisz writes as follows:—"With the advance of autumn a pestilence nears us, to which the plagues of Egypt were mere child's-play. Yet a little, and pianofortes will begin to furiously rage together; the newspapers will overflow with accounts of four-handed

collisions, by which not only living men, but the illustrious dead, Mozart and Haydn to wit, will come to grief. Each successive day will bring with it a fresh soloist; and if we critics succeed in chopping the head off one of these tone-cannibals, ten new heads will sprout up in its place. The pianist is a musical Hydra. Mankind appears to be smitten by a novel epidemic, which—unlike the far more agreeable cholera—assumes its deadliest form during the autumn and winter. There are three varieties of this terrible epidemic—the piano plague, violin convulsions, and the singing sickness. If the germs of these diseases be discoverable has not as yet been scientifically established; but I cannot doubt that some Professor Koch of the future will detect its microbes, and bottle them *secundum artem*. It will then at last be feasible to become an artist artificially. Let me put a hypothetical case; a family, in which there are several daughters, all of that age in which it is not good for girls to live alone. Papa, who has given them life, is ready to take his own because he cannot plant them out in the garden of matrimony. Suddenly a remedy for his ills suggests itself to him; the microbes of music! He hurries off to the Professor's laboratory and buys him three phials, full of bacilli. He administers a dose of No. 1 to his eldest daughter, Amanda. The effect is magical. Forthwith she crimps her hair, adjusts a *pince-nez* to the bridge of her nose, sits down to the piano and plays "Les Cloches du Monastère." To his second daughter he gives a spoonful of No. 2. In less than no time she snatches up a violin and scrapes the "Devil's Sonata" with blood-chilling vigour. The third daughter swallows a drachm of No. 3; and lo! she becomes a singer, without in the least knowing how. She must have a fine figure, though, and be outrageously *décolletée*; endowed with these qualifications for singing, she does not need a voice. Nowadays we eat chalk instead of flour and drink coloured chemicals instead of wine; shall we not be content with voiceless singing? When Papa has provided for his daughter thus, he can do his sons a good turn with the balance of his bacilli. Let him give them a few spoonfuls; their hair will grow like mad, and they will never comb it more. In other words, they will become musical *virtuosi*. Such people are like Samson; their powers lodge in their hair. If we could only persuade pianists and fiddlers to let their nails grow as long as their locks we should seen be freed from both these plagues. But how shall we rid ourselves of the vocalists, male and female? In this direction the public is defenceless. In vain we forbear public concerts; private life is full of *virtuosi*. Yea, even in the most respectable families do they abound. Is there, then, no remedy for this disease? Yes, there is one; and I will impart it to you in the deepest confidence. Only yesterday I asked a brother critic, "How on earth did you manage to survive all the concerts of last season?" He smiled astutely, withdrew two large plugs of wadding from his ears, held them out for my inspection, and murmured: "Behold my talisman! In this alone is salvation." In view of the approaching concert season I earnestly advise all music-lovers to avail themselves of my colleague's inestimable specific for the treatment of the threatening epidemic."

Another interesting letter has reached my cognizance during my holiday. It does not deal with matters musical, and therefore, strictly speaking, lies outside my province in this magazine. But it possesses unquestionable interest for the readers of THE THEATRE, as emanating from Tommaso Salvini; which circumstance must be my excuse for reproducing it in this place. Salvini's son Gustave has recently taken to the stage, much against his father's will, and only the other day scored a success at Rome in Gazoletti's tragedy "Paolo." Signor Checchi, an old friend of Tommaso Salvini, wrote to the latter, congratulating him on his son's favourable reception in the Italian capital, and received the following answer, which throws much interesting light on the present condition of the Italian stage:—"Dear Checchi,—Although I am very grateful to you for sending me a newspaper notice of my son's artistic success, I should have much preferred to learn from you that he had earned one or two per cent. on some commercial or banking transaction to the tune of three or four millions of lire. This remark need not astonish you, for you, as well as all my friends, must know how strongly I have always objected to my son's obstinate resolve to follow the dramatic profession. At the age of fifteen I was a penniless orphan, compelled to act in order to live. Necessity and self-esteem, not inclination, drove me to the stage. Subsequently, public encouragement and not infrequent success taught me to love the dramatic art; and I should be guilty of ingratitude were I to run it down now. But, glancing at the general conditions surrounding that art at the present moment, how can I possibly approve of my son devoting himself to its pursuits? I am not blinded by renown of the past or present; my eyes are fixed upon the future. The example is before me, also, of many eminent actors, whose career has ended in miserable poverty. Domeniconi was obliged to appeal to the pity of his fellow-players, in order to avoid dying in the workhouse. Bellotti-Bon committed suicide after forty years of popularity as actor and manager. Majeroni alternates between satiety and starvation. Morelli, the Tessero and the Pezzani are certainly not brilliant examples of well-being; and the innumerable hosts of actors with whom I am personally unacquainted, but who apply to me—as to others, no doubt—for pecuniary assistance or charitable benefits, tell their own tale. I fancy I hear you reply, 'And you, yourself? and Rossi? and Ristori?' Exceptions only prove the rule; moreover, if I, Rossi, and Ristori had been restricted to Italy for our earnings, we should not have pocketed enough to buy vegetables wherewith to flavour our soup. 'Well,' you will say, 'why do no others go abroad, there to make their fortunes?' My friend, that class of enterprise is become extremely difficult, if not impossible. Foreign countries are beginning to take justifiable and praiseworthy pride in their own national artists. Our celebrities no longer go down abroad. The Pezzana and the Tessero did terribly bad business in South America; and you cannot deny that they are two excellent actresses. Ristori, Rossi, and Salvini constitute a Trinity of "stars" that is still accepted, or tolerated abroad; as old acquaintances; out of politeness; not to appear inconsistent; by reason of friendly consideration for Italy, which has

remained sympathetic to foreigners at all times and during her each and every social or political development. But woe to him or her who shall venture to try the experiment anew, led away by hope, or even by reliance upon real good past services. It is all up with Italian dramatic artists, as far as foreign countries are concerned. Italy is the only mother they have to look to; she means well, assuredly, but she has no milk for them. Such being the condition of their maternal wet-nurse, you will readily understand that they must needs dwindle, peak, and pine."

I have received Lindsay Sloper's new "Manual of Harmony," a lucid and compendious work which will be heartily welcome to teachers of music, and even more so to their pupils. Essays on Harmony, in this and every other language with which I am acquainted, are for the most part rendered obscure by ill-advised displays of their author's learning, or are so overladen with technical terms as to be absolutely repugnant to the majority of students. In Mr. Sloper's treatise these hindrances to intelligibility are carefully avoided. His explanations of the laws and conventions of Harmony are propounded in plain language, easily to be understanded of the people. They are arranged, in consecutive and progressive order, in twenty-four lessons, which may be learnt with ease in the course of two school terms—commencing with "Intervals, and the Diatonic Major Scale," and terminating with "Two, Three, and Five-Part Harmony." All the exercises are written in close harmony, which offers far greater facilities to the intelligence of elementary students than does extended harmony. I cordially recommend Mr. Sloper's Manual to all colleges and schools in which music is taught, and to governesses in private families, who so often, for lack of an intelligible system to teach by, muddle the brains of their pupils as well as their own, and lay the foundation of life-long wrongheadedness, as far as the real meaning of musical rules and regulations is concerned. To these unfortunate ladies, who are expected to teach many things which they do not themselves understand—amongst others the science of Harmony—the little book above referred to will prove a real blessing. It is published by Mr. Joseph Williams, at 24, Berners Street. The same publisher has recently brought out several harmless, mildly melodious songs, which are sure to be a good deal sung by unambitious drawing-room vocalists, being all that middle-class society can desire in the way of mediocrity. Four of them are called "Jack's Courtship" and "So the Story Runs," by Lionel Elliott; "Patient Love," by P. de Faye; and "Forgive," by G. H. Newcombe. Mr. Williams seems to be a good deal addicted to publishing pianoforte Morçeaux de Salon, by M. Henri Roubier. This gentleman's works recommend themselves to "society players" by their freedom from technical difficulties, and by the distinctness with which they remind their hearers of compositions already familiar to their ears. Thus, M. Roubier's "Avant l'Attaque" is an agreeable reminiscence of a well-known march by Anton Rubinstein; whilst his Polonaise in E flat is an easy version of a Grande Polonaise by Chopin, which every pianist plays, and vast numbers of dilettanti attempt to play, with more or less

success. A sweet old Russian air, "The White Slipper," has obviously inspired M. Roubier with the leading *motivo* of his "Chacone," a pretty little thing, suitable to juvenile players. All these pieces may be played by young ladies after dinner without fear of offence.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

Our Play-Box.

THE NEW MAGDALEN.

MISS ADA CAVENDISH made her reappearance on the stage at the Grand Theatre, Islington, on Monday, September 28, in "The New Magdalen." However opinions may differ as to the morality of Mr. Wilkie Collins's most successful drama, there can be no doubt on the hold it exercises over an audience of the Islington public. The play was new, and it was interesting to watch how they at first hesitated to accord their sympathy to Mercy Merrick, when the woman who is socially ostracised, through no fault of her own, is tempted to personate the companion whom she believes to be dead. As the drama progressed, partly owing to the skilful construction of the author, and partly to the charm and earnestness of the actress, they are completely won over, and by the end of the great scene in the second act they have so entirely taken Mercy Merrick to their hearts that they almost forget she has done any wrong at all. Space does not admit of our describing in full on this occasion the psychology of "The New Magdalen," but it may be pointed out that it is a mistake to suppose that Grace Rosebery represents a really good woman. What she does represent is a respectable woman who has been very much wronged, in contradistinction to a woman, whom the world would not hold respectable, who had committed a great wrong, greater far than she had ever contemplated. Grace Rosebery is destitute of Christian charity as she is of the nobler form of courage. She has not a word, much less a feeling, of sympathy for the unhappy woman who scorns to sail under false colours, but frankly tells Grace her sad story. Although this woman has done all she can to help Grace herself, and is engaged in the noblest practical work of mercy, she will not even give her her hand; but, directly the shots of the Germans are heard, she flies, like a coward, to the protection of the woman whom, just before, she scorned to touch, and cowers in terror by her side without a thought of the wounded prisoners, or of anything else but her own personal danger. Even after she has suffered so much, and has recovered her reason and her life—only to find that she has been robbed by another of her name and her worldly possessions—the petty spitefulness and meanness with which she asserts her rights, the cruel way in which she stabs every tender feeling of the humble and repentant sinner, justly alienate our sympathies from her; and prove that she is intended by the author to

represent not a really good Christian woman, but a narrow-minded, uncharitable Pharisee. The author's purpose is fixed upon teaching his audience that, if we say these words from The Lord's Prayer—"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us"—it involves our endeavouring, at least, to practive forgiveness towards others, not only when it suits our convenience and costs us very little self-sacrifice, but when it is most repugnant to our feelings, and necessitates a complete sacrifice of our self love no less than of our resentments. It must also be remembered, in justice to the author, that the necessary qualities of a drama concentration and theatrical effect, prevent his showing in full the sincerity of Mercy Merrick's repentance. If repentence is a luxury allowed to others besides those sinners who move in the highest society, and are possessed of several thousand a year, then Mercy's repentance deserves our thorough forgiveness. It is a pleasure to those who remember Miss Ada Cavendish when she first played as Mercy Merrick in "The New Magdalen," to mark the great artistic progress she has made since that period. Whatever might be the faults of execution in her earlier performances of this part, there was always ample evidence of a very vigorous conception of the character, and of a very powerful embodiment of that conception; but the Mercy Merrick of to-day is an infinitely more artistic creation than the Mercy Merrick as first represented at the Olympic Theatre. The psychology of the character is much more carefully developed. In the delicate shades of intonation of the voice; in the variety of gesture; above all, in that most essential feature which distinguishes a great actress from an inferior one, however talented, namely, the perfect absorption of the individuality of her own self in that of the assumed character, which is the evidence that the artist has not only thought out the words she has to say, but also the thoughts she has to think when not speaking; in all these respects Miss Ada Cavendish's "Mercy Merrick" is now a most interesting study to those who love the dramatic art. Very rarely does she lapse into that over-rapidity of utterance which marred some of her earliest successes; while she has learnt to soften the abruptness of transition from one emotion to another, which was to be noticed in her earlier representations of this part. Mr. Leonard Boyne's conception of Julian Gray is different to that of Mr. Archer, the original of the part. Mr. Boyne is very quiet and natural; sometimes, indeed, he takes the part in rather too low a key. But he is thoroughly in earnest, and in the more impressive speeches he showed real feeling, which could not fail to touch the hearts of his audience. Mr. Fuller Mellish has genuine emotional power, and a very good presence, but he should get rid of a slight tendency to "prettiness of style." Mr. Elworthy must be congratulated on his brusque and crisp performance of the German surgeon. This young actor possesses great versatility; he is a good low comedian, as his performance of Mr. Walker in "In His Power" proved, and yet can do good service in small parts of a serious character. Mr. Norris deserves a word of praise for the careful way in which he played the Servant, a part on which a good deal depends, and to get a laugh in which is fatal to

some of the most serious situations in the drama. Miss Adelaide Bowering, who has been too long absent from the stage, was a very good Lady Janet, that handsome and strong-minded woman who for so long a time and with such obstinacy refuses to believe in the imposture of the woman she has taken to her heart. Miss Blanche Garnier is certainly one of the best Grace Roseberys that I have seen; she plays with incisive force, and does not forget to convey that taint of insanity which one can charitably suppose to have clung to Grace after her long illness in the hospital, and which shows itself in the fierce spitefulness with which she claims her rights. The drama was mounted in a manner quite worthy of a West End theatre.

M. F.

"DARK DAYS."

An original play, in five acts, by J. Comyns Carr and Hugh Conway. Produced at the Haymarket Theatre, on Saturday, September 26, 1885.

Sir Mervyn Ferrand, Bart.	Mr. H. Beerbohm-Tree	Counsel for Defence ...	Mr. E. Maurice
William Evans	Mr. Robert Pateman	Counsel for Prosecution	Mr. Forbes Dawson
Hon. Percy Pentland	Mr. Charles Sugden	Drummond	Mr. Basil West
Reggie Morton	Mr. Gloster-Armstrong	Dalton	Mr. Ulrick Wynter
Charlie Punter	Mr. Edward Ottley	Dr. Basil North	Mr. Maurice Barrymore
Edward Sleight	Mr. Arthur Davison	Mrs. North	Miss Lydia Foote
The Judge	Mr. J. B. Durham	Miss Ethel Brabourne ...	Miss Helen Forsyth
		Philippa Lafarge	Miss Lingard

The task of adapting a successful novel for the purpose of representation on the stage can surely be no very enviable one. The public, already familiar with the story of the play, can hardly expect to find anything new in connection with the plot, and each spectator has fixed in his mind the ideal that he has formed of the personal appearance, the voice, and the gesture of each individual character. The actor, as well as the adaptor, is thus placed under a disadvantage. It therefore behoves both playwright and player to use all the skill that lies within them to make their work striking, impressive, indelible. In doing this both Mr. Comyns Carr and the Company engaged at the Haymarket Theatre have been entirely successful. Mr. Carr, who adapted "Far from the Madding Crowd" and "Called Back" for the stage, appears to be as fond of, as he is successful with, this kind of work. Of the three plays founded by him on well-known novels, the last is by far the best. No time is cut to waste. The melo-dramatic story once started progresses swiftly and carries with it an irresistible and intensely absorbing interest. The comedy scenes between the Hon. Percy Pentland and Miss Ethel Brabourne (flippant people who might very easily be dispensed with at no sacrifice whatever to the drama) occupy too much time in the first act, but we are speedily informed of Dr. Basil North's love for Philippa Lafarge and of the latter's alliance with Sir Mervyn Ferrand. Mr. Carr has bestowed particular pains upon the interview between the unscrupulous baronet and his unfortunate dupe, and this scene is, in my opinion, the best constructed, most dramatic, and most powerful in the piece. The escape from Dr. North's house at Roding of the terror-haunted, delirious Philippa is capitally managed, and the incident of the murder of the baronet by William Evans, and the startling appearance on the scene of Philippa, followed by Basil North,

is most cleverly constructed. The effect, however, of this terrible picture is considerably marred by the "arrangement in line" at the conclusion of the act of the four principal characters who assemble with astounding alacrity to accept the approbation of a delighted audience. The sun-lit Seville scene is short and satisfactory, and leads immediately to the gloom of the trial to which it affords a valuable contrast. I write, be it noted, nearly a month after date of the original production. Since the first night the play has been greatly improved. The dialogue has been curtailed, an unnecessary scene has been entirely done away with, and in less important particulars the play has undergone a change vastly for the better. One of those meaningless examples of scenic art which is supposed to connect the action of one part of an act with the other, but which only distracts the onlooker, still remains as a blot upon the production. "Dark Days," despite the small blemishes indicated, is a particularly interesting drama and quite one of the few really good productions now before the London public. The Sir Mervyn Ferrand of Mr. H. Beerbolm-Tree is a clever study of character; light, blasé, cool, terribly sarcastic, and shallow, he is just the man to deceive a woman and to be deceived by a man as unscrupulous as himself, but more cunning and badly educated. I have always regarded Mr. Irving as a master in the art of making-up for the stage. He has a close follower in this respect in Mr. Tree, whose appearance as Sir Mervyn Ferrand is a veritable triumph of "make-up." Another fine performance in this play is that of Mr. Robert Pateman as William Evans. In his vulgar bravado with Ferrand and in his expression of horror at this murder of him, he conveys the various changes of the character with admirable art, presenting a forcible, firm, vivid sketch of the man. In the trial scene, where he has no single word to speak, he conveys to the audience, by his mere look, all the agonised workings of the guilty conscience of the wretch. In this he accomplishes no very difficult feat for a sound actor, but he affords an example which might well be taken to heart by many of the young men who have of late years embraced the stage as a profession and who pay more attention to wig-paste and crape-hair than to the inner workings of the characters they are called upon to portray. The look of terror in Mr. Pateman's eyes and the quivering of his frame as the murderer stands in the dock, and his despairing cry as he gazes upon the figure of Philippa Lafarge, are infinitely more effective than the most studious colouring and lining of the face ever resorted to, or the most elaborate wig ever invented by Mr. Fox or Mr. Clarkson. As the heroine of this play, Miss Lingard has made a distinct advance as an actress; she shows a power and pathos of which few had thought her capable. In the dignity of Philippa's interview with Sir Mervyn, in the scene in Seville where she becomes convinced that she is guilty of the crime of which Evans stands accused, and in her powerful declaration at the trial, she is alike excellent. The Dr. Basil North of Mr. Maurice Barrymore is an easy, gentlemanlike impersonation, but the actor plays

"How's that, Umpire?"

HOODMAN BLIND.

George Barrett

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,
263, OXFORD STREET, W.

"Were my whole life to come one heap of troubles,
The pleasure of this moment would suffice,
And sweeten all my griefs with its remembrance."

NAT LEE.

Laura Linden.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,
263, OXFORD STREET, W.

throughout in far too subdued and monotonous a key. Miss Lydia Foote as Mrs. North, Mr. Charles Sugden and Miss Helen Forsyth as the flippant young people already mentioned, render all the service demanded of them. The smaller parts are well filled, and the scenery is picturesque and suitable; indeed, in the mounting of the play, and in minor particulars, such as providing the free use of opera-glasses for the occupants of stalls and balcony, Mr. E. Russell and Mr. G. F. Bashford, the new managers of the Haymarket Theatre, appear to have done everything in their power to follow in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors.

AUSTIN BRERETON.

Our Omnibus-Box.

MISS LAURA LINDEN, whose photograph appears in this number of THE THEATRE, made her first appearance in London at Sadler's Wells Theatre on April 16, 1881, when she acted Baiby Haggitt in the play written by Mr. Henry A. Jones for Miss Bateman, called "His Wife." On leaving Sadler's Wells she went to Toole's Theatre to play Mattie in Mr. A. W. Pinero's "Imprudence," a part which she subsequently sustained at the Globe Theatre. At the Gaiety Theatre, in 1883, she was the original Dulcie in Mr. Edward Rose's version of Mr. F. Anstey's novel, "Vice-Versâ," and at he Strand Theatre, in the same year, she acted Gerty in "Silver Guilt," a burlesque of "The Silver King." She was then engaged for the Olympic Theatre, where her most notable achievement was her pathetic portrayal of Louise in "The Two Orphans." Mr. Wilson Barrett next engaged her to act Almida in the last provincial tour of Mr. Herman and Mr. W. G. Wills's "Claudian." Miss Laura Linden is now engaged at the Gaiety Theatre, where she is appearing with much success in the principal female part in the burlesque now being represented at that house.

Mr. George Barrett, one of the best, because he is one of the most natural and versatile of our comic actors, was born at Clare, near Esham, Suffolk. When a boy he was sent to learn the business of printing with a firm in Fleet Street. But he had a natural desire to become an actor, and eventually—through the aid of his brother, Mr. Wilson Barrett—he succeeded in obtaining an engagement at the old Theatre Royal, Durham. Here he played for a season, this engagement being followed by one for Aberdeen, for second low comedy and comic singing. He remained at Aberdeen more than two seasons. Whilst there he appeared in many characters, and played with G. V. Brooke, Charles Kean, Miss Avonia Jones, and the Brothers Webb. He also acted at various Scotch towns, including Elgin, Arbroath, Montrose, and Dumfries. His engagement terminated at the last-named town, and he then commenced a season at the

Norwich Theatre Royal, under the management of Mr. Slater. But, unfortunately, the season lasted only nine nights. In those early days, when the work was hard, and remuneration disproportionately small, he had to make a long and tedious journey in order to commence an engagement. He had skilfully piloted his heavy property-basket almost to his journey's end, when he was stopped by a keen-sighted station master, who demanded a pound in payment for the excess luggage. The wearied and dismayed traveller tendered his only remaining coin, a shilling. "You can take it out of that, then," he said; "it's all I have." "What do you mean? Who are you?" he was asked. "I'm an actor going to fulfil an engagement, and I can do nothing without my basket," was the reply. "God help you, then! You can take it free," said the kind-hearted official as he pressed back the shilling into the hand of a man too much affected to return his thanks in more words than a broken-voiced "God bless you!" Such hardships as this were not uncommon in the life of an actor in those days. Such fellow-feeling, however, was seldom experienced.

But brighter days were not far distant. They came with Mr. George Barrett's first years in London. His *début* on the Metropolitan stage was made at the St. James's Theatre, where he acted Dr. Brown in "Progress," and Navet in "Vert-Vert." He might have remained permanently in London had he not been tempted by an excellent offer to visit Calcutta. Here his success was remarkable, and on two occasions he appeared before the Prince of Wales, who was then on his visit to India. On one of these occasions, when Mr. Charles Mathews played Adonis Evergreen in "My Awful Dad," and Mr. George Barrett acted Richard, the prices of admission to the theatre ranged from three to one hundred pounds. Returning to England he was engaged for the Criterion Theatre, where he acted in "Mary's Secret." He was then engaged by Mr. Charles Wyndham to act Brisket in the provincial tour of "Pink Dominos;" his impersonation of this character was an instance of remarkably good comedy acting. Then followed a singularly humorous and artistic piece of acting as the Bailie in "Les Cloches de Corneville." Mr. Barrett then became director of one of his brother's principal companies, and in the first performance of Mr. George R. Sims' drama, "The Lights o' London," at the Princess's Theatre, he made an instantaneous success in the character of the old showman. He played Boss Knivett in "The Romany Rye" with remarkable fidelity to nature, and he acted Daniel Jaikes in "The Silver King"—a most artistic and eminently natural rendering of character. In "Claudian," he appeared as Belos. His latest success has been made in "Hoodman Blind," in which play he acts Ben Chibbles, a character in which he has been specially photographed for this magazine.

The production of "Dark Days" at the Haymarket draws public attention again to the lamented Hugh Conway. The novel of "Dark Days, almost equal to "Called Back" in originality, and far

superior for dramatic purposes, is a striking example of the vigorous construction and compact arrangement of fresh ideas which peculiarly characterised the works of this unusually successful writer. Apart from his acknowledged literary talents, he possessed qualities that won him the respect and attention of all who were brought into private contact with him. From his earliest childhood he suffered from epileptic fits. This misfortune was the cause of his leaving the Navy. How deeply he regretted this compulsory inactivity was partly shown in his assumption of the name "Conway"—an apparently natural and casual choice, which yet reveals to an acute observer much of the clever author's inner character—and more fully in some of his earlier letters, in which regretful allusion is made to the painful necessity that condemned him to a quiet life. The public, however, will not echo these regrets, since to this "quiet life" it owes so vast an amount of literary enjoyment. Among these letters—written nearly twenty years ago and sad to re-peruse now—are some written in fantastic rhyme, descriptive of scenes visited by the writer, and incidents of his daily life. These are interesting, apart from their poetical peculiarities, for minuteness of observation, and a keen sense of humour, racy and sparkling as that of Mark Twain. Both these qualities are conspicuously absent from the writings given by Hugh Conway to the world; so conspicuously absent, indeed, that every line from his gifted pen suggests a brooding mind, incapable of a humorous thought. The vein of comedy running through these early letters is therefore as remarkable as it is refreshing, and tends to confirm a recently expressed belief that his books were not the outcome of his heart, but of his brain.

They are rather the compositions of a powerful intellect than the expression of human feelings, impulses, and passions. The story of Pauline's semi-insanity, natural as it may seem, was founded on fact. Nineteen years ago, as nearly as possible, Hugh Conway frequently left Bristol for Portishead, partly for the benefit of his health, and partly to visit a much-esteemed friend. On one occasion, while there, he was introduced to a family among the members of which he found the prototype of Pauline. There was the same apathy, the same total loss of memory, combined with childlike docility; the cause was similar, but less tragic. This woman without a past impressed the young author deeply; how deeply is related in one of his longest letters, sent from Portishead. Around this strong central idea he wove the web of circumstances which constitutes the plot of "Called Back." With the original of Gilbert Vaughan, then staying at Clifton, he had many a conversation. On this point, however, he was extremely reticent, and after the departure of that gentleman for London to consult a distinguished oculist, nothing more was heard of him. It is probable that Conway, then one of his most intimate friends, continued to communicate with him, and thereby gained a deeper insight into a character destined afterwards to be so widely known. Naturally reserved, the young writer's delicate constitution and almost continual ill-health fostered this tendency to self-communion, and his silence on a subject was an infallible proof that it had obtained a firm

hold on his mind. His memory was remarkable, and the impressions it received ineffaceable. As an arithmetician he was unsurpassed. The working out of difficult problems occupied a considerable portion of the time which could not be devoted to more active pursuits.

In these early days he had not yet applied himself seriously to literature. Beyond an occasional ballad nothing had been written. There were the letters, certainly, charming, whether in verse or prose, many of them gems of literary excellence; but of these he thought little, and, unfortunately, very few of the original number have been preserved. His weakness would not permit him to engage in athletic sports. Sometimes he formed one in the Avon fours, but very rarely, neither his tastes nor his strength encouraging him to continue this exercise; and after awhile these turns on the pleasant Western river became wholly incidents of the past, on which he looked back with little pleasure and no regret. Singlesticks he was enthusiastically fond of. A year or two later he concentrated his attention on literary work. He possessed an imagination so vivid that it outsoared the trivialities of everyday existence. Hence his works are more remarkable for originality and force of conception than for eloquence or minute analysis. He seemed impatient of elaboration. His sentences are terse and forcible, expressing always the greatest possible amount of meaning in the fewest possible words. Even his letters were examples of condensed thought, although showing far greater powers of observation than his books suggest. The immense popularity of his thrilling stories is the more surprising in that they appeared at a time when the public taste inclined strongly to photographic literature. "Called Back," in particular, is most unreal where the interest is strongest; indeed, it appears to have been the safety-valve of an enthusiastic mind burdened with peculiar opinions on abtruse subjects. "Dark Days"—to the dramatised version of which Hugh Conway's countless admirers wish every success—reminds the reader in some respects of its striking predecessor. Basil North is Gilbert Vaughan under another name; Philippa is a second Pauline, for whose sake her husband travels, as in "Called Back"; and the character of Sir Mervyn Ferrand savours slightly of a less prominent Macari. Still, this faint—and to many imperceptible—resemblance is to be traced in nearly every work that immediately follows a "hit" in music and libretto as in books. The charm and interest of "Dark Days" none can deny. Judged from a dramatic standpoint, it is, perhaps, Conway's best work. The pleasure with which it is welcomed on the boards is rendered almost melancholy by the thought that the author cannot share it; that he who had anticipated its representation with the deepest enthusiasm is gone from our midst in the first flush of success. He was a brilliant talker on topics of general interest, a staunch and sympathetic friend, and a true-hearted man; and great as his loss undoubtedly is to the literary world, it is greater still to the favoured few who enjoyed the privilege of personal intercourse with him. He bore his honours modestly. He had never sought the world's recognition. His career was quiet, until it burst

suddenly into the full glare of fame, thence as suddenly to be closed for ever.

The revival of Casimir Delavigne's old play "Don Juan d'Autriche" at the French Plays, the other day, takes one back one-and-twenty years ago to the old Princess's Theatre, then under the management of George Vining, and to the sudden success of a brilliant, beautiful, and gifted little French actress, who dared to come to England to play "Juliet." It was for her that John Oxenford arranged his capital version of "Don Juan d'Autriche," which he called the "Monastery of St. Just," and though at that time it made no particular mark, we who were playgoers in those days can remember the good acting in it of Henry Marston, George Vining, and John Nelson, a soft-voiced actor, who played Romeo to the Juliet of Stella Colas, when she first appeared in this country. Dear me! What a discussion this little French lady caused! There was a deadly feud at that time between the old school and the new school of acting, between the good old Tories of the legitimate drama and the impulsive young Radicals who were quietly advocating the school of nature. The critics who knew Macready, the playgoers who would not see that the drama between his retirement (1851) and fourteen years afterwards had terribly fallen into disrepute, would have no more to do with a French Juliet than with a French Hamlet. They would have "boycotted" Stella Colas, as they verily attempted to "boycott" Fechter. How they raved and stormed at the Frenchwoman and the Frenchman, how they protested that these foreigners should never come and take "the bread out of the mouths" of the English-speaking actor, how daring it was for any writer to take up the cudgels in favour of anyone who gave a new idea of Shakespeare's heroes and heroines! Had they had their way, and some of us been silenced as impertinent upstarts, we should have had no visit of the Comédie Française, no Salvini as Othello, no Sarah Bernhardt, and few of the impulses that stirred the spirit of the stage revival some twenty years ago. Possibly, Fechter as Hamlet was too familiar, and Stella Colas as Juliet too impassioned for English tastes, but it was a treat to get one breath of nature, one touch of heart in exchange for the monotonous maundering which came in that dull interlude between the departure of Macready and Helen Faucit, and the happy advent of Henry Irving and the Terry family. We may have seen better Juliets than Stella Colas; we have certainly seen dozens of English actresses who were far worse. For my own poor part, seeing what I have seen, I am not likely to forget the innocent enthusiasm, the poetic fervour, the girlish delight of this lovely Juliet as she bade farewell to her Romeo in the balcony scene, and I shall ever maintain that the "potion scene," as Stella Colas played it, was one of the very few moments of inspired acting that I have ever witnessed. I am aware that George Henry Lewes wrote that "the proof of the deplorable condition of our stage is seen in the success of Stella Colas," but I did not think so as a boy, and am not inclined to change my opinion as a man.

Talking of "Don Juan d'Autriche" reminds me that we have been recently treated to what purports to be a defence of that dreary production written by one of the new cock-a-hoop school who thinks that all criticism is rubbish that does not proceed from his own silly pen. He begins his ill-written, inconsequent, disjointed stutter with the usual abuse of the critics. All youths do this. "How we apples swim." He thinks, and says, he can write a far better article than the "critics of the daily papers," because he has time to write, and can see what they have said. That is candid at any rate. On his own showing he is no journalist, and takes his opinions second-hand. He is an extraordinary youth. The critics having said, as did the public, that Casimir Delavigne's play was "dull," "unsatisfactory," "excellently mounted," and would not "run," our cock-a-hoop censor has to sing small about this "noble play," and admits—"in a certain sense"—that it is dull and unsatisfactory, and was a failure. One critic having remarked—which was perfectly true—that the *dresses* were accurate "to a button and a dagger hilt," young cocksure immediately ridicules him for eulogising the accuracy of the *scenery*. As a matter of fact, the dresses were exactly copied from those worn at the Comédie Française. But listen to our young friend. "I did not count the buttons, and only saw one dagger." After this, is not the "cheap enthusiasm" of the present race of critics better than the vulgar swagger of the sucking scribe?

Has it ever struck the reflective that it is often the one moment of true art in an otherwise uninstructive or moderate entertainment that really attracts the public? How many dull scenes in a play will we not at all endure for the one fine moment, the one short instant of inspiration, the one thrill that comes when the exactly right chord is touched. For scarcely two minutes Miss Kate Vaughan dances at Her Majesty's Theatre, a brief 120 seconds of grace and charm. The audience is under some immediate spell. She charms like one of the night dancers of the old German legend. It is not the mere tune of the valse or the steps that are executed that produce the effect. It is the expression or embodiment of all that is dreamy and abandoned in a valse measure. No one knows what it is—it is irresistible. But for this one brief spell people go to a long ballet, excellent no doubt in other respects. They enjoy it all. But when all is over they think of that dream-valse. Again, Mrs. Weldon is announced to appear in a lunacy law drama full of conventional melodramatic horrors, women strapped down on beds, warders felled with crowbars, mistresses shot by their paramours, and so on. Ask the people when they come out and they will tell you that they would have endured all this, and more than this for the sake of hearing Mrs. Weldon sing Gounod's "Ruth." It was the "one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin." It was electric in its effect on the audience. Conservatives and Radicals, moderate people and sensation mongers, agitators and sneerers, were all one under the spell of a song that

touched every human fibre in the audience. Why? Because it was consummate art. As Miss Vaughan had attracted the artistic sense in the valse so did Mrs. Weldon in the song. To go a little lower down in the scale, although we find here art as dominant as in the other two instances, I am told again and again that men and women go night after night to the Gaiety merely to hear Mr. Arthur Roberts sing "Told by the Postman's Sister." I am not surprised at the success, for it is a capital song capitally sung. More than that, it is the one minute that attracts everybody present. How seldom it is that a genuine touch of art ever misses its mark? This is at any rate a consolation.

I have received the following from Mr. George W. Baynham, a well-known theatrical student and critic in Scotland:—

"Excuse me for correcting what I fancy is a slight error in one of your articles in this—or, to speak by the card—last month's THEATRE. In Mr. Turner's exceptionally interesting 'Random Recollections,' he mentions William Smith as having been the low comedian at the Surrey in 1842. As far as my memory serves me, I think Mr. Smith had died prior to that time. I—then but a small boy—was a great patron of the Surrey about that time, and remember the production of 'Blanche Heriot' vividly, but I cannot call to mind W. Smith in connection with the piece, and I am nearly certain his career ended with the withdrawal of E. F. Saville—Lady Martin's brother—from the theatre. The soubrette who acted with Smith was a Miss Martin—the original Nance in 'Oliver Twist,' when Saville played Sikes, Smith Bumble, and a low comedian called Ross the Dodger, old John Cooper playing Brownlow. Was not the low comedian who played in 'Blanche Heriot' named Vale?"

A "constant subscriber" writes:—Will you permit me to correct an error in the interesting memoir which Miss Wallis contributes to the October number of THE THEATRE. Speaking of the year 1879, Miss Wallis states that "two performances of 'As You Like It' were given in Manchester for the benefit of Chas. Calvert, at the first of which Miss Faucit played, and on the second night I had the difficulty of being her successor in the part." These two performances were given on the 1st and 2nd October, 1879, for the benefit of the Widow and Children of the late Chas. Calvert (who died on the 12th June, 1879), and were styled the "Calvert Memorial Performances." And, instead of Miss Wallis "having the difficulty" of being Miss Faucit's successor in the part of Rosalind, Miss Wallis appeared on the *first* night and Miss Faucit on the *second*. The fact is impressed on my memory, as on the second night, Thursday, October 2, 1879, I had the pleasure of seeing Miss Faucit on the stage for the only time in my life; and I have, moreover, in my possession a "memorial programme specially designed by Stacy Marks, Esq., R.A.," which bears out my statement.

Dramatic students owe one more debt of gratitude to Mr. Percy Fitzgerald. Everyone who loves the stage is anxious to hear what Charles Lamb thought about the theatre and the players of his day. But his remarks are scattered over many volumes, and occur in innumerable Essays. Those who have got one book have frequently omitted to procure the other. So Mr. Fitzgerald has collected Charles Lamb's theatrical essays and dramatic memoranda into one neat little volume, and appended to it a valuable commentary contrasting the theatrical age of the present with that of the past. "The Art of the Stage," by Percy Fitzgerald (Remington and Co.), is a delightful as well as a useful little book. It will be found instructive to such as desire to understand the actors of the past and the art they practised, and some of the criticism may astonish those superficial young gentlemen who exhibit so much horror when plays and players are discussed in a light, free, and animated style. Here is a passage, for instance, that would frighten the dull, modern, unimaginative school if it were written and appeared in a newspaper of to-day.

"But the Princess of Mumpers and Lady Paramount of beggarly counterfeit accents was she that played Rachel. Her gabbling lachrymose petitions; her tones, such as we have heard by the side of old woods, when an irresistible face has come peeping on one on a sudden; with her full black locks and a voice—how shall we describe it?—a voice that was by nature meant to convey nothing but truth and goodness but warped by circumstance into an assurance that she is telling us a lie—that catching twitch of the thievish, irreprovable finger—those ballad-singers' notes, so vulgar, yet so unvulgar—that assurance so like impudence and yet so many countless leagues removed from it—her jeers, which we had rather stand than be caressed with other ladies' compliments, a summer's day long—her face with a wild out-of-doors grace upon it—."

But then Charles Lamb lived at a happy time. His footsteps were not dogged by little journalistic curs, who told their readers where he lunched, where he supped, what he thought and what he did not think, what he said and did not say, how many glasses of gin and water he consumed, how many pinches of snuff he took. They did not snap at his heels as he walked between the India Office and Canonbury. The great artists he admired in his youth were not jeered at because they had "toothless gums" or ridiculed because they were old and on the shelf. The actor and actresses of his days thought it no compliment to be championed by men destitute of all feeling and dead to all taste. Who shall say that if the gentle Elia had been amongst us to-day and had written of a pretty actress, as he wrote of Miss Stevenson in the "Jovial Crew," he might not have been accused of "greasy gush."

Fancy any writer at this period of the nineteenth century daring to print this of an old favourite. "Joyousest of once embodied spirits) whither at length hast thou flown? To what genial region are we permitted to conjecture that thou hast flitted? Art thou sowing thy Wild Oats yet (the harvest time has still to come with thee) upon casual sands of Avernus? or art thou enacting Rover (as we would gladlier think) by wandering Elysian streams? . . . There by the neighbouring moon (by some not improperly supposed thy Regent Planet on earth, mayst thou not still be acting thy managerial pranks, great *disembodied Lessee?* But lessee still and still a manager. In green rooms, impervious to mortal eye, the muse beholds thee wielding posthumous empire. There ghosts of figurantes (never plump on earth) circle thee in endlessly, and still their song is *Fie on sinful phantasy*. Magnificent were thy capriccios on this globe of earth, Robert William Elliston; for as yet we know not thy surname in heaven." Thus wrote a dramatic critic of a dead theatrical manager at the beginning of the present century.

So much trash—and evil trash too—has been put forward in stories about the stage that one turns with misgivings to novels that profess to deal with theatrical life. An exception to the rule is Mr. John Coleman's "Curly; An Actor's Story," which, originally published in the "Graphic," has been issued in book form by Messrs. Chatto and Windus. Throughout his story Mr. Coleman shows not only love and respect for the art of which he has been so many years a distinguished exponent, but an unaffected style and a power of pathos that make the book profoundly interesting.

I have received the following gratifying letter from a friend of THE THEATRE in Australia:—"As an old subscriber to THE THEATRE, and naturally one who has an intense interest in all that relates to the stage, I desire to offer you my little word of encouragement in the good work you are engaged upon. In the first number of the current volume you speak of certain difficulties being overcome and threatened disaster to the little ship averted. It pained me to hear of fresh troubles being encountered, but gave me pleasure to know that you are still able to continue the voyage. At this distance, and in this comparatively small community, one cannot do much in the way of assistance; but I desire to thank you for having afforded me something more than merely pleasant hours with your magazine. Pleasant hours, indeed, I have spent with my THEATRE; but further than this, I have, or rather feel that I have, a friendship with you, Mr. Editor, and all who are working for THE THEATRE, whose course is a higher and nobler one than that of those journals that retail 'tit bits' for the delectation of persons whose vitiated taste demands spicy dishes only. No; THE THEATRE has a different purpose, and I pray you go on and that you will reap a deserv-

ing reward. It is very probable that the fact of your not having catered for the demand for questionable matter makes your work more arduous, but I hope that brighter days are dawning, and that the very difficulties it has had to encounter will place THE THEATRE in a more impregnable position. It would be an irreparable loss to all who have the interests of the stage at heart were THE THEATRE at this time to cease; we want it to tend the good seed already sown, and I trust it will soon see the healthy corn ripen into a bountiful harvest. Accept, my dear sir, the best wishes of one who has watched the progress of your magazine almost since the time you took the helm."

At Her Grave.

AS boy and girl we had played together,
We were boy and girl when my darling died,
And they buried her 'neath the purple heather
Where we'd wandered so often, side by side.
I remember a tiny cloud went sailing
Out in the stretch of the sky's blue roll,
And a sudden glad fancy stayed my wailing,
For I thought its white purity—Dorothy's soul.

I remember I stood by the roses she'd tended,
And kissed their pale faces a tearful good night,
And saw how the sunset had lovingly blended
Its red and its gold with the beautiful white,
Till it seemed, as I watched in my sorrowful wonder,
That the veil was upheld for a moment's swift space,
And straining my gaze as the clouds burst asunder,
I caught a brief vision of Dorothy's face.

Oh! blessed child-trust! As a man who has striven,
And failed, and lost faith in the world and its ways,
I kneel by the child who was truly *God-given*,
And dream once again of those far away days,
Till the lengthening shadows creep over the heather,
And the purpling path where the children once trod
Grows as lost as those years when we wandered together,
Ere the angels bore Dorothy homeward to God.

All Soul's Day. M. E. W.

THE THEATRE.

The Falstaff Letters.

By Godfrey Turner.

I HAVE always thought it honourable alike to the discernment and the good faith of the public that they have "fought shy," with a coldly reticent suspicion and mistrust, of James White's "Falstaff Letters," which may have been about half James White's, but which were quite as much, in actual quantity, and vastly more in quality, Charles Lamb's. Does anyone doubt it? Reading between the lines of good-natured puffs in the *Critical Review*, and Leigh Hunt's journal, *The Examiner*, it is as plain as the plainest nose on the plainest ot plain faces that the writers were coerced by their own kindness into pretending, and almost into *believing*, that they *believed* Charles Lamb's account of the authorship. That Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, and Talfourd allowed themselves to be completely hood-winked I for one never can regard even as a bare possibility. They yielded to the love with which Elia had inspired them.

James White was an "Old Blue," a Christ's Hospital *alumnus* whom Leigh Hunt remembered with admiration of "his handsome appearance, and unimprovable manner of wearing his new clothes." Sometime after quitting the school as a boy, he held a responsible office there, in his manhood. He was, no doubt, a humorist; and his humour took the amusing bent of a Shakespearean imitativeness, an aptitude of characteristic phraseology. But this should never be mistaken, as it was most decidedly, most wonderfully mistaken by Lamb, for humour of the great, original quality denoting a high class of mind. It is trick, and nothing more. Do we not all know men with some habitual oddity, some whimsical turn of speech—it may even be of thought—which, in the hot blood of conversation, hits the sense of humour happily enough,

but is no more the real thing, if expressed in writing or print, than the cartridge is the shot. Tom Serjent, in the Back Kitchen, that cosy haunt of night-birds, is accustomed in his cheery cups to round the language of familiar comment and friendly salutation with the rhythmic stateliness of heroic verse, greeting Mr. Arthur Pendennis, on his entrance in the habiliments of society, with pomp of Dryden's measured speech and slow—with decasyllable and proud iamb: "Pendennis! Thou dost wear a thirsty look. Resplendent swell! Untwine thy choker white, and let me order thee a glass of grog; or thou shalt do the like for me, my lad, and tell us of the fashionable world." The Tom Serjent tone—"Hast thou flown far, thou restless bird of night?"—will always captivate a blithe, good soul by its cordiality as well as by its nimble wit. But we are not going into raptures about Tom Serjent's genius, nor thinking of canvassing for votes to establish his equality with Dryden.

Nor, on the whole, was James White equal to William Shakespeare. Only, James White, with much heartiness of drollery, and with some savour of feeling, had the imitative faculty, the mocking-bird note that is not a note; and he caught the twang of Shakespeare though not the music. He could talk Dogberry, talk Touchstone, talk Launce and Speed; but especially could he talk Falstaff and his gang. People called him Sir John. He went to a masquerade as the fat knight, and sent everyone wild with admiration and jealousy. He was, for years, Lamb's most frequent companion. "For hearty, joyous humour, tinged with Shakespearean fancy, Jem never had an equal." Out and alas! tinged with Shakespearean patter, an thou wilt; with fancy, no; or but of the pallidest. Lamb has let out the secret that he himself it was who put James White up to the Henry IV. plays; that White read them, on Lamb's recommendation, "rather late in life, though still he was but a youth;" that, thereupon, while the humour sat new on James, the cronies called their house of meeting (and drinking) the Boar's Head, and that they carried the joke to the extent of qualifying Burton ale or gin-and-water, by the agreeable term, "sherris-sack," or dry sherry. He would then—that is James White would—"talk you nothing but pure Falstaff the long evenings through." Sherris-sack, sicklied o'er with the pale cast of juniper, is not critical. That the wit of White should have seemed to the ear of Elia "deep, recondite, imaginative, full of

goodly figures and fancies" was probable enough; but if it had all been taken down in shorthand, and read out to Charles next day, as the Albine utterances he had pronounced deep, recondite, and imaginative, he would, perhaps, have stammered forth, "How d-d-d-drunk I must have been!"

Nevertheless, it is indubitable that C. L. conceived a genuine admiration for J. W., whose initials shine with the halo of affection on the Elian page. Those times of Falstaffian facetiæ and sherris-sack were also times of sorrow and distress with Lamb; and it may be imagined that the well-sustained and oft-renewed joke was to him a consolation in the midst of daily trouble—yea, misery and domestic wretchedness.

When the thin little book came out, it fell dolefully flat, though most persons suspected its true authorship. Southey, writing to Edward Moxon, says of White—"He and Lamb were the joint authors of the 'Original Letters of Falstaff.'" Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt considers those to be on the right scent who deem the little book a partnership. He inclines to the belief that "White's lucubration had the merit at least of having first directed the attention of Lamb to Shakespearean letters." This is in direct contradiction to Lamb and to likelihood. It is just putting the cart before the horse. My own theory is that Elia fell into the trap of his own generously eager imagination, prone at all times to see the best in everything he liked. In his ordinary manner of quoting he shows what few other men have shown—a *spiritual accuracy* far above even the most conscientious literalness. It is seldom that any citation by him is verbally correct; but it gains in his service, without losing grace or propriety of its own.* Whatever struck him at the moment as apt and good, took root in his mind and grew. Here, then, is my point. Lamb went from these symposia full of readily assimilated fun. It was, to speak one of his own favourite words, cogitabund. Into his mental being the fancy had entered; there it gained strength, expansion, enrichment. He deemed it all his friend's, not for a moment dreaming how much, how very nearly the whole, was his own. When the process of manipulation began between them, he

* The late H. S. Leigh, a far more deeply read and appreciative student than most men suppose, happened once in my hearing to quote Shakespeare *through* Lamb. I took the familiar liberty of giving him the exact words. He expressed disappointment, and said that Lamb's version was finer than the original.

(Lamb) supplied unconsciously the essence he had supposed to be there from the first.

Except on this hypothesis, it would be difficult to account for Lamb's extravagant praise of work which was in any substantial part his. I take it that, so far as any real literary merit was there, *all* was his, and no other man's. Had James White been the fine spirit, kindled at the Shakespearean flame, that the warmth of Lamb's friendship and imagination would have us suppose, we must surely have heard of him in some other connection. The lively and entertaining Fletcher would have got loose sometimes from the correcting Beaumont, or we should have had "the two noble kinsmen" in conjunction otherwhere than in these Original Letters. It cannot be else. How characteristic is it of Lamb's geniality and guilelessness, of his utter lack of egotism—notwithstanding the honest pride he took in his own prose—that he should have thrust on another the credit of a fancy which had so fascinated him, and which was his own! In these days of general scrambling over the money-value of an idea, how curious is it to think of a genius so rich and so humble that it casts away copyright as dross, and relinquishes the possession of refined gold in favour of some man of straw!

That gross imposture—the fabrication of Shakespeare MS. by the two Irelands, father and son—was the occasion of the "Falstaff Letters." The little book was mockingly dedicated to "The right curteis and erudite Master Samuel Irelaunde," in a ludicrous epistle, which was printed in black letter. A more scheming satirist than Lamb might have seen his opportunity in Jem White's peculiar habit of putting every-day thoughts and images into quaint modern-antique verbiage. Any cool-headed middleman of letters might have discerned in White's ready command of Shakespearean expressions and epithets the convenient material of such a literary squib as was now to be let off in the face of the crafty Norfolk-street book-dealer. Lamb's lofty simplicity forbade any such idea of taking a friend at an advantage. The course was plain. It was to invite co-operation in the scheme, to bestow on White's crude parrot-phrases the touch of art, and then to relinquish all credit in the work, giving the honour to original suggestion. And this, no doubt, was what Lamb did, only that he did more, and lost consciousness of his own identity in bowing to that of his friend.

Lamb writes thus to Coleridge (and the letter is remarkable as being the first in his published correspondence, as containing a copy of the sonnet to his sister, and as including the intimation that the writer had, for six weeks of the year then lately past, been confined in a mad-house at Hoxton):—"White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) 'Original Letters of Falstaff, Shallow,' &c. A copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw." The date of this letter was May 27, 1796. He puts the matter more directly to Coleridge in the July following:—"White's letters are near publication. Could you review 'em or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the *Critical Review?*" Then he commends the good conceit of the frontispiece, which represents Falstaff in doublet of olden cut, and with modern pantaloons and dancing-pumps; and then he sums up the merit of the whole work as being "full of goodly quips and rare fancies." The review solicited is cautiously given, Lamb's eulogistic suggestions being softened down, almost to the deep damnation of faint praise. "Much superior to Dr. Kenrick's 'Falstaff's Wedding,'" is reduced to "Somewhat more successful, we think." Although, as Talfourd says, Lamb exerted all the influence he subsequently acquired with now popular writers to obtain for it favourable notices, the book resisted all pushing. Lamb bought copy after copy from the refuse of booksellers' stalls, and dealt out each sixpenny jewel among the unconverted. He stuck manfully to his colours; that is, to the White flag. Four years after the publication he is found writing thus to Thomas Manning, the Cambridge mathematical tutor:—"I hope by this time you are prepared to say the Falstaff Letters are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas that now be ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, Manning!" Manning dug, with what effect is not certified in any chronicles of spade-husbandry.

As time wore on, Lamb's regard for the book became a craze. When he sent his own notice to the *Examiner*, more than twenty years had gone by since the publication of the Letters. He began with a piece of gossip, on which was afterwards cast the shadow of scepticism:—"A copy of this work sold at the Roxburgh sale

for five guineas. We have both before and since that time picked it up at stalls for eighteen pence. Reader, if you shall ever light upon a copy in the same way, we counsel you to buy it." After another lapse of eighteen months, White having died meanwhile, Leigh Hunt repeated the notice, transferring it from the *Examiner* to the *Indicator*, and introducing it with a few personal reminiscences of Lamb's friend. But it is always observable that the warmth of praise falls many degrees below the blood-heat of Lamb's encomiastic eloquence, when, at his instigation, mild reviewers take up the parable of Jem White's Shakespearian quips and cranks. Each man, no doubt, had his own particular notion of Lamb's part—how much or how little—in those quips and cranks, and in their Shakespeareanism. Full scope was left by Lamb himself for critical imagination, he not so much as hinting that a single touch of his had brought additional life and character to the Letters. The concensus of secret opinion, partially obscured at the time, has come to light by successive disclosures; and we have now fully in evidence the general impression among people who knew both White and Lamb. "These Letters," wrote a citizen of Bristol, on the fly-leaf of his copy, "were the production of my old schoolfellow, James White, with incidental hints and corrections by another schoolfellow, Charles Lamb."

The better half of the little book, I will maintain against all comers who hold the contrary, is Lamb's. I have admitted that he was proud of his prose, but I should amend that admission by saying he was rather fond than proud of it. He wrote, as he declared, "for *antiquity*." To antiquity then, and neither to posterity nor to contemporaneity, did he leave the valuation of his merit. Few are such men, but they come on earth now and again for the lowering of our pride. In my own time I have known one of them. There are many who will recognise an admiring, unselfish, sacrificing soul, at the mere sound of a once familiar name—the name of "Jeff" Prowse. To my knowledge, the gentle, mirthful creature who bore that name ascribed to other pens the daintiest productions of his own. His delight in them was too delicate to admit any infusion of vanity. The pleasure of giving forth wit and fancy, and pretty mockeries that were bitter-sweet, ended with the act, and was not increased or extended by consciousness of its effects. In the exuberance of sad or playful thought he would often scribble his phantasies on any loose scraps of paper, and toss

them aside. I remember one. It fell from him when, in the forlorn hope of bodily renewal, he was about visiting the south of France, where he soon after died. In a few idle moments he had sketched, without artistic skill, but with wonderful truth of suggestion, the head and bust of a poor, consumptive, over-tall errand-lad, who went between him and his printers. On one of the high narrow shoulders of the portrait-sketch he seated a grinning little skeleton. Some fragments of unpolished verse, jerked out of him by quick pity, fell below. As near as I can call them to mind, the rhymes ran in form following :—

"Age fourteen—
Might be older—
Looks much more.

Had you seen
Death on his shoulder,
Your heart, like mine,
Knowing the sign,
Would be sore."

I recollect thinking at the time this was just such a thing as Charles Lamb might have done ; and I think now, with the knowledge of facts to prompt me, that Charles Lamb's ostensible delegation of faculties and functions to the Falstaffian Jem White was just such a thing as might have been done by William Jeffrey Prowse.

Let us glance for a minute or two at the Original Letters. They are not in strict epistolary form ; nay, have very little epistolary *vraisemblance*, strange carelessness being shown in this respect ; and I would ask any shrewd investigator whether such laxity does not seem attributable to a real humorist, rather than to a careful imitator, such as was Jem White at the best. One piece is in dramatic form ; and this must, I think, have been Lamb's whole and undivided work. It is a "Deposition taken before Master Robert Shallow and Master Abram Slender, at Windsor," regarding a strange apparition which was seen, by the clownish deponent, to rise from the Thames at Datchet Mead, accompanied by great disturbance and upheaval of the waters, and by a roaring as of some prodigious bull. The examination of the witness is truly Shakespearean, and as good as a similar, but much longer and more elaborate, scene in Landor's "Imaginary Conversations." Justice Shallow's sapient conclusion is that the monstrous figure which floundered and flounced about in the Thames, scrambled to

the bank, and then rolled over like a huge tub, before finally landing, was the Welsh magician and rebel, Owen Glendower; and he bids the Berkshire clown hold himself in readiness to repeat his wonderful story afore the Privy Council.

Another piece of Lamb's own humour will, I think, be discerned in a message from Antient Pistol to Master Abram Slender. The love-lorn youth appears to have been tampering with Pistol to aid in the composition of verses for the gentle wooing of sweet Ann Page. His very slight acquaintance with the Antient must have been his excuse for fancying that this rhetorician would go to work without a fee in advance. The Antient, desirous of holding up to Master Slender's admiring vision proofs of divine afflatus, begins thus:—

> "Let Doves and Lambkins sigh. Must Pistol verses write?
> Down, princely choler, down!"

Presently he dallies with the proposal, hints at payment, and seems to hold out some hope of relenting. Not, however, till he has vented some extremely uncomplimentary judgments on Slender's parts of speech, and has sworn that "Pistol will nought indite,"

> "Till Fox shall cater for the silly Goose,
> And lordly Lion eke for base Jackal."

Then he softens a little.

> "Mecænas is the word—
> Poets their patrons have, and verses do ensue.
> * * * * *
> Shall Phœbus threadbare go; the Muses nine also;
> Those dainty Imps on top of high Parnasse;
> Shall they undower'd weep?
> * * * * *
> Pistol Pistoles doth love—like loveth like.
> Let purse-strings crack—Nan Page is thine, sweet boy."

But the labourer must live. Pistol lacks Pistoles. Of this quaint conceit the Antient is proud, and he repeats it, with the accompanying assurance that he lacks nought of wit; that, in fact, Pistol is the Sun, before whose face

> "Fenton shall flee;
> Yea, be exhaled, like damnèd dog of dunghill."

There is a letter from Corporal Nym to Sir John Falstaff:—

"I will no more with Pistol rob. I do revolt. My fist is struck, and that's the humour on't. His phrases are known on the road. Venison hath mickle sweets, and sweets are luscious things, and luscious things do

fit the maw of Nym; but thieves do hang, and their accomplices; and Nym would hang alone. Doth the humour pass? The Antient is abstruse; he robs not at a word; travellers ken not his phrase; and parley is not good on the road, and that's the humour on't. I do revolt, but mutiny is quell'd with grants. Let Pistol utter couthly, and then come fellowship again. When speech will not bewray, then Gloucestershire's the word. But *pauca*, Nym's a man of few. Sir John, I touch my brow, my fist is flat."

Sir John essays reconciliation of the two worthies. He implores them not to break out again. Pistol replies, with a slur on Nym's brevity and iteration of his "humour on't." Shall he the model be, forsooth?

> "Shall paucity of phrase and impotence also,
> Curb manhood with the rein?
> And shall it show the bit?
> Shall Mutes and Asian dogs control the tongue?
> And shall not Man speak free?
> Why then Avernus roar!
> Then Rhadamanth his yawning flood-gates ope,
> And Rowen brim her Chalice!" *

Together with much more of the same sort, all of which is funny enough, but not perfect fooling. The deficiencies cannot be bridged over. White, we may grant, had the requisite knack, in a degree quite good enough for convivial purposes, and must have been a very amusing companion at the Salutation or the Feathers. But he had not sufficient art for burlesque authorship. Lamb, on the other hand, was too original. His own antiquity of speech was infinitely better than his imitation of Falstaff, Nym, Pistol, Shallow, Slender, Sir Hugh Evans, Doctor Caius, Captain Fluellin, Prince Hal, the Bishop of Worcester, Dame Quickly, and others whose various modes of diction are here, with more or less of failure, tricked forth. The best parts of the work, unmistakably his though they be, are yet wholly beneath him. The worst is that on which he has wasted most praise. "Come," he says, "and weep over the dying-bed of poor Abraham Slender." This most mechanical piece of pathos, utterly unworthy Charles Lamb, is a flat crib from Dame Quickly's account of the death of Falstaff, and we refuse to weep, even at the bidding of the gentle Elia.

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* Allusions to Rowen and her chalice, in the "Falstaff Letters," are sly hits at the Irelands.

A Plea for Old Favourites.

By Charles Hervey.

A FRIEND—his name I won't betray—
Took me to task the other day,
For hinting merely,
That he, a lover of the stage,
Judged actors of a by-gone age
Rather severely;

"I don't believe," my critic said,
"In what I've heard, or what I've read
Of Past perfection;
The present's good enough for me,
Nor need I tax my memory
With retrospection.

"I've seen stage villains frown and glare,
While growling with mysterious air,
'I must dissemble!'
I've seen John Cooper imitate
The lengthy pause, the solemn gait
Of 'glorious' Kemble;

"Ranting, and passion torn to rags
I've heard, and idiotic gags
Not even funny;
So dreary, flat, and stale, I vow
I would not listen to them now
For any money.

"Now, when in stall we sit at ease,
We're critical and hard to please,
And more exacting;
Dresses from Worth *our* stage must show,
And pieces full of 'chic' and 'go,'
And first rate acting!"

"Are you then sure, my friend," said I,
"That modern theatres supply
All that you mention?
And is there nothing—*entre nous*—
That fairly claims a word or two
Of reprehension?

"Are gags less frequent than of old?
Rant is not quite extinct, I'm told,
Much to my sorrow;
Nor do our authors, now and then,
Ideas from a Gallic pen
Disdain to borrow.

"How to dress well our fair ones know,
Their portraits make a pretty show
On painter's easel;
But 'chic' and 'go' and Worth combined
Will hardly make a Rosalind
Or Lady Teazle;

"Unless—as sometimes is the case—
The lady's talent, wit and grace
Enhance her beauty;
Then, I confess, I'm 'all for her,'
And, if I do not greatly err,
Say, *et tu, Brute?*

"Why then so stubbornly deny
The claims of those whom you and I
So well remember?
Young we were then in life's bright May,
Although, alas! we're both to-day
Nearer December.

"Say, was not Kean, above all men,
In Richard's robes our idol then,
And in Othello?
When Falconbridge's part he took,
Did not Charles Kemble truly look
A gallant fellow?

"And Nisbett's laugh, and Foote's bright smile
None knew so well love's witching wile,
Whoe'er might she be;

And Vestris, how her deep voice rang,
When 'Cherry Ripe' the siren sang,
A matchless Phœbe!

"Those by-gone days! With sneering air
Oh, say not rashly that they were
Of talent barren;
Against such thoughtless words protest
Thalia's fav'rites, first and best,
Glover and Farren.

"No, no, be just to ev'ry age,
Nor rob old lovers of the stage
Of mem'ries pleasant;
Give all their due, from first to last,
And while, friend, you respect the past,
Enjoy the present!"

The Reign of Emile Perrin.

By William Archer.

THE welfare of the Théâtre Français concerns not Paris alone, nor France alone, but the whole world of art. Take it all in all, no theatre can boast such high traditions, such a long and brilliant history, such a various and noble repertory. It traces its descent, not obscurely or doubtfully, from Molière; and unless we English had a "House of Shakespeare" to match against it, what more illustrious ancestry could a theatre claim? And even if we had a "House of Shakespeare," its repertory could scarcely be placed in the scale against that of the Maison de Molière, unless on the good old principle that "one jolly Englishman" is equal to any three Frenchmen. Corneille, Molière, Racine, Regnard, Marivaux, Beaumarchais, Voltaire, Hugo, Georges Sand, Musset, Augier, Dumas: no single dramatic literature, be it of Italy, England, Spain, or Germany, can show so many names and so great. It is the function of the Théâtre Français to keep the hundred heirlooms of the French drama from mouldering in tarnished obscurity, and to encourage the passing generations to add to the store. If it declines from this ideal, the whole world is the loser, just as when some great historic monument is suffered to fall into decay.

We have a clear interest, then, in trying to arrive at the truth with regard to the much-discussed administration of M. Emile Perrin, which, after lasting through fourteen eventful years, has just come to a close. It is admitted on all hands to have been a period of unexampled financial prosperity. The Français in these years has been the most popular theatre in Paris, making its "maximum" night after night; and this monetary success is admitted to have been mainly due to the energy and sagacity of M. Perrin. "But," say his critics, "he has been killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. He has played the part of the selfish and short-sighted husbandman who overcrops the soil,

and leaves it exhausted to his successor." As Gibbon traced the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," from the seemingly splendid age of the Antonines, so M. Sarcey and other prophets of ill predict that the decline, if not absolutely the fall, of the Théâtre Français will date from the reign of M. Perrin. Are they right?

Let us glance back over the fourteen years between the 8th July, 1871, and the 8th October, 1885, during which M. Perrin held sway in the Rue Richelieu. A lover of the Maison de Molière, M. Pasteur by name, has just presented to the committee a sort of memorial trophy of the reign of M. Perrin, in the shape of a series of portrait-panels representing the principal artists who have appeared under his management. The following description of this work of art will serve as a sort of bird's-eye view of the period:—

The first of the panels contains the portrait of M. Emile Perrin. . . . . On his right is depicted the muse of Tragedy, whose features recall those of Mlle. Dudlay; on his left the muse of Comedy, who is not unlike Mlle. Bartet. A portion of the auditorium of the Théâtre Français on a first night is seen below: in the orchestra and boxes M. Dantan has painted the regular frequenters of these solemnities, the principal authors and critics, MM. Emile Augier, Alexander Dumas, Victorien Sardou, A. Vitu, Sarcey, de Lapommeraye, Garnier, Jules Claretie, &c. On either side is a framed letter, one from M. Perrin, the other from M. Got, thanking M. Pasteur for his intelligent initiative, and congratulating him on its excellent result.

The next panel shows us artists, some of whom are now no longer members of the Comédie Française, but who were at the zenith of their fame at the time when M. Perrin became manager: Mme. Favart, in modern dress, all in black, in the part which she created in "Paul Forestier" (this is one of the finest portraits in the collection); Mme. Jouassin, in Dame Pluche; Mme. Madeleine Brohan, in her part in "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie," Mme. Arnould-Plessy, as Clorinde in "L'Aventurière;" Mme. Edile Riquer, in Philaminte.

The succeeding panel might be called the Committee panel, for we see there M. Got, the senior member of the company, in his part of the Rabbi in "L'Ami Fritz," with his pointed cap and black surtout; M. Delaunay, in modern dress; M. Coquelin, wearing the red mantle of the ceremony in the "Malade Imaginaire;" M. Maubant, solemn and dignified in the armour of Don Diègue; M. Febvre, in the cap of L'Ami Fritz; M. Worms, in the costume of Georges Rantzau.

Then in the fourth panel we have the late Regnier, who, as everyone knows, was stage-manager at the Théâtre Français, in modern dress; Mlle. Reichemberg, so pretty, so graceful, as Suzette in "L'Ami Fritz;" the lamented Mlle. Royer, in the "Parvenue;" Mlle. Croizette, as she appeared, superb, sparkling, in the second act of the "Princesse de Bagdad;" M. Thiron, as the Marquis de la Seglière; M. Mounet-Sully, as Ruy Blas.

In the fifth panel are Mlle Sarah Bernhardt as the Queen in "Ruy

Blas;" Mlle. Blanche Barretta in "Barberine;" Mlle. Emilie Broisat, in the grey dress of Kitty Bell in "Chatterton;" M. Laroche, as Almaviva; M. Barré, in "Bertrand et Raton;" M. Guilloire, Contrôleur-Général of the Théâtre Français.

Further on is Mlle. Jeanne Samary, light-hearted and laughing, as Zerbinette, in "Les Fourberies de Scapin;" Mlle. Lloyd, very handsome, in the part of the wife of Tabarin; Mlle. Bartet, wearing the blue dress of Mlle. du Vigean; M. Coquelin cadet, under the great hat of Basile, in the "Barbier de Séville;" M. Bodinier, secretary; and M. Georges Monval, archiviste of the Comédie Française.

The last panel represents Mme. Pauline Granger as Dorine in "Tartuffe;" Mlle. Dudlay, in the long tragic peplum; Mlle. Tholer, delightfully pretty, in "L'Aventurière;" M. Prudhon, in "Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle;" M. Silvain, as a tragedian; and lastly, M. Eugène Garraud, the oldest of the *pensionnaires* of the Français.

So much for the actors of M. Perrin's period. The record of plays is no less remarkable. Augier and Sandeau have produced "Jean de Thommeray;" Augier alone, "Les Fourchambault;" Dumas, "L'Etrangère," "La Princesse de Bagdad," and "Denise;" Sardou, "Daniel Rochat;" Feuillet, "Le Sphinx;" Erckmann-Chatrian, "L'Ami Fritz" and "Les Rantzau;" Pailleron, "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie;" Becque, "Les Corbeaux." Of plays in verse, we have had "La Fille de Roland," "Rome Vaincue," "Jean Dacier," and "Garin;" of one and two-act plays, "L'Acrobate," "L'Absent," "L'Eté de la Saint-Martin," "Chez l'Avocat," "Tabarin," "Le Petit Hôtel," "Le Luthier de Crémone," "L'Etincelle." The list of revivals is headed by "Hernani," "Ruy Blas," and "Le Roi s'Amuse," and includes "Les Effrontés," "Paul Forestier," "Le Demi-Monde," "Le Fils Naturel," "Le Gendre de M. Poirier," "Mademoiselle de la Seiglière," "Le Marquis de Villemer," and a host of others—"j'en passe, et des meilleurs." Reviewing such a record, one can scarcely call the administration of M. Perrin less fruitful in point of art than in point of money. It was certainly neither inactive nor inglorious; and what more, it may be asked, can we require?

To this the pessimists reply, "If not inactive, it was improvident; if not inglorious, it was irreverent. It repressed rising talent, and it neglected the classic repertory."

The functions of the Administrator of the Comédie Française are many, but these four are the chief: the engagement of *pensionnaires*, the selection of pieces for revival, the distribution of parts, and the staging of plays. He has nothing to do with the choice of the *sociétaires*, who supply by election the vacancies in their own ranks; and he has only a limited voice in the acceptance or

rejection of new plays, which is a matter for the *comité de lecture*. In each of the four departments which were specially under his care, M. Perrin is accused of grave derelictions. It is said that he engaged, in a dog-in-the-manger fashion, all the rising talent he could lay his hands on; that he thus kept a crowd of young *pensionnaires* on the books, but never gave them a chance of appearing on the stage so as to gain experience and catch the public ear; that he wilfully neglected the classic repertory, openly confessing a distaste for tragedy, and a prejudice against certain comic writers such as Regnard, who "bored" him; and that he sacrificed literature, art, tradition, everything, to a morbid passion for *mise-en-scène*, partly a result of his training as a painter, partly an evil habit contracted during his directorship of the Opéra and of the Opéra-Comique, but mainly an outcome of the grovelling desire to attract the unthinking crowd by glitter and display, and so make money at all hazards.

It is undeniable that M. Perrin found the personnel of the Théâtre Français stronger than he left it. The three "pillars of the house," Got, Delaunay, and Coquelin, he found ready-made to his hand; and he has certainly provided no adequate successors for the two former, who must, in the nature of things, retire ere long. Maubant, Thiron, Barré, three admirable actors of the second order, were likewise, so to speak, ready-made; and Febvre and Worms had already won their spurs when M. Perrin assumed the command. Unless it be Mounet-Sully, it is hard to name a single actor of confirmed reputation who has won his laurels *consule Perrin;* but then it is open to M. Perrin to retort that before we can convict him of closing the career against the talents, we must prove the existence of the talents to which he should have opened the career. This, from the very nature of the case, it is difficult to do. We may point to such actors as Garnier, Volny, and Paul Reney, driven to the boulevards for lack of opportunities of distinction in the Rue Richelieu; but it is questionable whether, with the best opportunities, any of these artists would have proved themselves talents of the first magnitude. It is clear, however, that a really provident administrator would have made greater efforts than did M. Perrin to bring his younger forces to the front. M. Sarcey, for example, complains that with a bill composed of "L'Etincelle" and "On ne badine pas avec l'amour," Delaunay is forced to overfatigue himself by appearing in both

pieces, while Lebargy, an actor on whom Delaunay's mantle may fall, if he be allowed the opportunity of development, is condemned to rust in idleness. "Why not allow Lebargy to play Raoul in 'L'Etincelle,'" the critic asks, "and so give him a chance of gaining experience and reputation?" "Because," M. Perrin replies, "my *abonnés de Mardi* demand the best of everything, and will not be put off with an under-study, when the original creator of a part is to be had." Whereupon M. Sarcey retorts, with acrimony, "To the devil with your *abonnés de Mardi!* They are at the bottom of the whole mischief." And so the matter rests.

As female talent naturally wears out and is replaced more rapidly than male, M. Perrin's administration has brought more actresses than actors to the fore. Mme. Arnould-Plessy and Mme. Favart have retired in the course of his reign, and Mesdames Madeleine Brohan and Jouassain, who culminated in the time of his predecessor, are on the point of leaving the stage, where no one seems likely quite to fill their places. On the other hand, M. Perrin's administration has seen the glory and decadence of Mlle. Croizette, the rise to fame and subsequent secession of Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, and the addition to the company of two talents of the first order in Mlles. Reichemberg and Samary, and two talents of the second order in Mlle. Broisat and Mme. Baretta-Worms. Mlle Bartet had already an assured reputation at the Vaudeville before the influence of Sardou secured her transference to the Français.

The accusation of wilful neglect of the classic repertory is one which must stand or fall according to our estimate of the place which the classic drama should rightly hold in a national theatre. The regulations of the Comédie Française would have prevented M. Perrin, even if he had been so minded, from entirely ignoring the masterworks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We find that in 1875, 26 classic plays were performed at the Français, of which 3 were by Corneille, 12 by Molière, 3 by Racine, and the rest by Marivaux, Regnard, Voltaire, and Sedaine. In 1876, 23 classic plays were performed; in 1877, 25; in 1878, 27; in 1879, 28; in 1880, 31; in 1881, 25; in 1882, 23; and in 1883, 24. In these nine years, nineteen out of Melière's thirty plays were performed, all the most important being repeated from five to fifteen times each season. Corneille's "Cinna," "Polyeucte," "Horace," "Le Cid," and

"Le Menteur," were frequently performed, and so were Racine's "Phèdre," "Esther," "Athalie," "Andromaque," "Britannicus," "Mithridate," "Iphigénie en Aulide," and "Les Plaideurs." It is clear, then, that the classics were not suffered absolutely "to lie in cold obstruction and to rot;" but it is also clear that much more might have been done to keep them vividly before the public. Whether much more ought to have been done is a question on which a foreigner is scarcely competent to give an opinion. Each nation must fight out for itself the question as to how much active allegiance it owes to the monuments of its past. For my part, I believe that, considering the limitations of the company at his command, which, with all its merits, was deficient in some of the most important *emplois*, both tragic and comic, M. Perrin did as much as could fairly be expected for the classic repertory.

In his fondness for *mise-en-scène* lies the true gravamen of the charges against M. Perrin. This was the great bone of contention between him and M. Sarcey. In an "Etude sur la Mise-en-Scène," contributed as a preface to the "Annales du Théâtre" for 1882 (published 1883), M. Perrin took up the cudgels in his own defence with a good deal of vigour, and with some by no means unnatural acrimony. His study took the form of a letter addressed to the critic who for years had attacked him, almost week by week, in his potent feuilleton. He begins by reminding M. Sarcey of a certain dinner at the Brunswick Hotel, Jermyn-street, during the visit of the Comédie Française to London in 1879. "J'avais invité avec vous," he says, "un des plus dignes et des plus éminents critiques de la presse Anglaise, M. Tom Taylor. Vous l'aviez en grande estime. Il était rédacteur du *Times*, et il exerçait sur les lecteurs de ce puissant journal une influence, une autorité, analogues à celles que vous exercez vous-même sur les lecteurs du *Temps*. Tout naturellement nous causâmes de théâtre, et la conversation tomba sur un sujet que vous avez souvent traité au cours de vos feuilletons: 'De l'utilité et des inconvénients de la mise-en-scène.'" Already there was a difference on this subject (which afterwards greatly widened) between the manager and the critic; and Mr. Tom Taylor, it seems, took M. Perrin's side in the discussion. It happened that "Le Sphinx" was to be played that evening at the Gaiety, a piece which M. Sarcey had attacked as owing its success entirely

to its scenery; and he promised himself "une satisfaction un peu féroce," says M. Perrin, in seeing it fall flat when presented without its accustomed trappings.* Far from falling flat, it was very well received, a fact which M. Perrin notes as a victory for his side of the case. He now proposes, he says, to renew the argument at the point where it was broken off that evening at the Brunswick Hotel, and to consider *mise-en-scène* under the three heads of stage-management (*le jeu des acteurs*), scenery, and costume.

To stage-management M. Perrin accords an importance which M. Sarcey himself would scarcely deny it. On this matter, indeed, the critic accused the manager of sins of omission rather than of commission. With regard to the first act of "Le Roi s'amuse," for instance, M. Sarcey and M. Perrin indulge in some amusing "cross-swearing." "Why," asks M. Sarcey, "does not M. de Saint-Vallier enter in high excitement, and disordered by his struggle with the valets in the ante-chamber?" "My good sir," says M. Perrin, "that is just what he does." "Why," asks the critic, "does he not make certain pauses in his long tirade?" "He does pause at the very places you indicate," replies the manager. "Why do not the courtiers make threatening gestures, which should be repressed by the King?" asks the critic. "They do, and the King represses them," the manager retorts. "Why does the curtain fall upon a tableau as stiff and orderly as a wax-work?" M. Sarcey demands to know. "On the contrary," M. Perrin declares, "it falls on a scene of disorder and confusion." In this series of contradictions, which side are we to believe? Not having seen "Le Roi s'amuse," I cannot answer with certainty. The explanation probably is that though all the "business" suggested by M. Sarcey was actually gone through, so little spirit was put into it that it failed, as the French say, to "pass the footlights." No one who has been at all conversant with the Français during the past ten years will call M. Perrin a good stage-manager, so far as his treatment of masses of men is concerned. Mr. Irving or Herr Chronegk, of Meiningen, have left him a hundred miles behind in that respect. The repertory of the Français contains few plays in which a crowd is introduced, and when, as in the dramas of Hugo, he was brought face to face

* M. Perrin asserts, by the way, that there is no truth in the report that Croizette resorted to artificial means (a blue light thrown from the wings) in order to produce the effect of ghastly pallor in the death-scene in "Le Sphinx."

with the unwonted problem, M. Perrin treated it according to the traditions and conventions of the Opera.* Hence, I suspect, the apparently irreconcileable contradictions of the above passage at arms.

On the question of scenery and costume, M. Perrin's argument is the simple and, I think, undeniable one, that the general tendency of modern art is towards realism, or (to steer clear of that dangerous term) towards accuracy of local and historical colouring, and that the theatre neither can nor ought to resist this tendency. He is quite at one with M. Sarcey in holding that "the play's the thing," and that the mounting should by no means distract our attention from it; but he asserts that threadbare or inappropriate scenery and glaringly anachronistic costumes are the very things which would most effectually distract the attention of an audience of to-day. One cannot but feel that M. Sarcey was unjust in attacking M. Perrin for absurdities in the mounting of such a play as "Le Roi s'amuse," in which the poet, with his divided and built-up scenes, garden and street, lower room and upper room, interior and exterior in one, has placed an impossible problem before the manager who is rash enough to grapple with it. We English, indeed, accustomed to the archæology of the Lyceum and the luxury of the Haymarket, find it hard to conceive that the accusation of too great love of display could be brought against M. Perrin with any show of reason. To me it seems that the mounting of plays at the Français during the past ten years has afforded an accomplished model of sober appropriateness. A few superannuated "cloths" are used—or were until recently—in the stock plays of the classic repertory; but, as a rule, meanness and tawdriness have alike been avoided. The mounting of such plays as "La Fille de Roland," "L'Ami Fritz," and "Les Rantzau" was very careful, but entirely subdued and artistic. An English manager would have spent twice as much money on such plays, and made the scenes much more gaudy, but not a whit more pleasing. In dealing with modern interiors—as in "Les Fourchambault," "Le Marquis de Villemer," and "Daniel Rochat"—M. Perrin erred, if anything, on the side of sobriety. "Si le tapissier," he says, "tient une

* It is perhaps well, for this reason, that he never attempted, what is said to have been his great ambition, the mounting of Alfred de Musset's "Lorenzaccio" with no curtailments or re-arrangements.

trop grande place dans la mise-en-scène de nos comédies, c'est que la recherche et le luxe de l'ameublement ont pris une place excessive dans notre vie." But as a matter of fact the upholsterer was never allowed to run riot at the Français, and only a fanatic for simplicity could assert that he played too great a part upon that sober stage.

Let us take leave of M. Perrin in the words of his relentless critic, M. Sarcey. "We shall often have to speak of him again," says the great feuilletonist, "for he has imprinted deeply upon the Comédie Française the mark of his taste and of his intellect. For fifteen years he has been its life and soul. From first to last he might have said, like Louis XIV., 'La Maison de Molière, c'est moi.' This is no mean praise to award a man, and no one will refuse it to M. Perrin; I, least of all. His successor will have much to do, in every way, if he is to fill his place."

Craig-y-Nos.

[Madame Adelina Patti's country seat in Brecknockshire stands upon a ledge of a huge green hill, the Welsh name of which is Craig-y-Nos—*Anglicé*, "The Rock of Night."]

ROCK of the Night! thy broad and rugged brow
Cleaves the white mist and braves the angry wind;
Girdling the mead that nestles at thy base
A crystal brook runs babbling to the sea;
And on thy verdant breast a jewel shines
Unique in splendour, lustrous as a star,
More precious than the magic gem of yore
That held the sprites of earth and air in thrall,
And made all living and all ghostly things
Obey the Royal Minstrel's Wizard son.
The priceless pearl thy bosom that adorns,
Old Cymric cliff, has mystic powers too;
Who gazes on it sees a vision bright—
The Queen of Song throned on the Rock of Night!

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

Craig-y-Nos Castle, October, 1885.

Our Musical-Box.

THE London winter musical season was opened early last month at St. James's Hall by Madame Adelina Patti, the attraction of whose name filled that spacious concert-room to overflowing with an audience enthusiastically appreciative of the great prima-donna's superlative vocalisation. She had sung two days before at Brighton, under the same engagement as that which she completed on the 7th ult. in London; and, strange to say, the death of her impresario for the nonce, Mr. George Watts, took place between the concerts for which he had secured her services by the payment of £1,000. The letter—nearly the last one he wrote or dictated—containing a cheque for that amount, reached her at her seat in Wales a few days before she came up to town to fulfil the engagement in question, and contained an expression of Mr. Watts's deep regret that, owing to the serious indisposition he was then suffering from, he would, in all probability, be deprived of the pleasure of hearing Madame Patti sing either at Brighton or London, paramount as was his interest in both performances. His death was a painful surprise to all the artistes engaged by him for the two "Patti Concerts," and, indeed, to English musical society at large, throughout which he was highly respected in his business capacity, and much liked for his many amiable qualities. His last concerts proved splendid successes, from a pecuniary as well as an artistic point of view; and it seemed strangely hard that their *entrepreneur*, a man in the prime of life, should have been robbed by Destiny of the fruits of his labour just as they were ripe to be gathered by his hand. The programmes of the two concerts were nearly identical in every respect—quite so, indeed, as far as Madame Patti's share in them was concerned; for at both entertainments she sang Verdi's "Ah! fors' è lui," Gounod's "Ave Maria," Rossini's "Giorno d'Orrore" (with Madame Trebelli), and Mr. Engel's "Darling Mine." A great many of Madame Patti's friends having expressed some curiosity—shared, as she has been assured, by a large proportion of the musical public—as to the reasons which may have prompted her to sing the last-named composition in London and Brighton on the occasions above referred to, I may mention that I have been given to understand that she did so in fulfilment of a promise made by her to Mr. Engel some months ago in connection with the Sainton-Dolby farewell concert at the Albert Hall. Disabled by indisposition from singing at that entertainment, she deemed it but just to fulfil her pledge to the composer of "Darling Mine" whenever an opportunity for so doing should accrue. That opportunity was offered by the concerts for which the late Mr. Watts engaged Madame Patti, and she resolutely

availed herself of it, although of opinion that the song was unsuitable to her voice—as, indeed, it is. Her rendering of it, however, was encored, which is not surprising, as she imparts a peculiar charm of her own to everything she sings. But I do not fancy that "Darling Mine" will be retained for any great length of time upon the strength of her concert-room *répertoire*. Since I have been familiar with Madame Patti's singing, I have never heard her in better voice than she was at St. James's Hall on November 7. Perfect rest and the bracing air of the Welsh hills, amongst which she has made her home, have enabled her to shake off the effects of the fatigue she incurred during her last tour in the States and her brief, but arduous, season at Covent Garden last summer. The wonderful organ with which she is gifted is as fresh, round, and far-carrying as it was a quarter of a century ago; the *tenute, fioriture* and *staccati* are produced with the same ease and finish that took London by storm on that famous Tuesday evening (May 14, 1861) when she made her *début* here, under Frederick Gye's management, in "La Sonnambula." A few hours after the conclusion of the second "Patti Concert," Madame Patti left London for Paris, where she proposed to remain a few weeks before entering upon a six months' engagement she has concluded with the Hamburg impresario, Pollini, comprising forty-eight performances, at £480 each. During this *tournée* she will sing in the chief cities of Holland, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Hungary, and Roumania, returning to England towards the end of May, 1886. The series of her appearances (in concerts as well as operas) was fixed, when she showed me an abstract of her *scrittura*, to commence at Amsterdam; and she expected to get as far as Bucharest, the limit eastwards of her tour, about the fourth week in January next. Allowing £3,000 for her travelling expenses, &c., she ought to clear £20,000 by this undertaking, without counting the value of the costly tributes that will certainly be paid to her by the Portuguese, Hungarian, and Roumanian publics, more susceptible to that enthusiasm for great artistes which expresses itself in splendid gifts than the less excitable and more business-like music lovers of this country.

Two hours after the dispersion of the crowd that had gathered together to listen to the *chatélaine* of Craig-y-Nos, St. James's Hall was again thronged by a highly musical audience, thither attracted by the excellent programme of Messrs. John Brinsmead and Sons' first orchestral concert, including an interesting and thoroughly meritorious symphony, composed for this year's Birmingham Festival by Mr. Ebenezer Prout. The influence of Mendelssohn's genius is manifest throughout this able work, no less in the leading characteristics of its melodies than in constructive treatment and methods of modulation; but the symphony displays enough of Mr. Prout's musical individuality—remarkable for its tenderness and grace—to substantiate whatever claim it may make to originality. The third movement (Intermezzo alla Spagnuola) is especially charming, and elicited a genuine outburst of hearty applause at its close. Beethoven's great P. F. concerto in E flat (opus 47), magnificently rendered by Herr Emil Bach, was, however, the event of the concert. It was evidently more

familiar than the Prout symphony to the capital orchestra engaged by Messrs. Brinsmead, and conducted by Mr. Mount with fair average skill. This fine body of instrumentalists, seventy-two in number, and nearly all Englishmen, with Mr. Carrodus as *chef d'attaque*, may be unhesitatingly pronounced equal to any orchestral enterprise. It played the lovely overture to Melusina, as well as its part in the noble concerto, with refreshing vigour and *verve*, exhibiting, however, from time to time, slight shortcomings in delicacy of finish, which obviously resulted from insufficient rehearsal. Herr Bach, who enjoyed the advantage of manipulating a magnificent instrument by the concert-givers—a grand piano, equalling in every respect the finest achievements of the great American and German manufacturers who have of late years established themselves so solidly in British public favour—interpreted Beethoven's masterpiece with the high intelligence and intense feeling that characterises this eminent pianist's renderings of classical as well as of romantic music. His reading of the majestic slow movement was exquisitely beautiful in itself, and specially interesting to the numerous pianoforte players amongst his audience as illustrating all the lights and shades of tone-colour producible from a perfect clavichord. Thus, I feel convinced, would the master himself have wished his sublime composition to be played, could he have prophetically known the wealth and variety of resource, in the way of tone, contained within the huge frame of a concert-grand of the present day. Remembering that such mighty works as the E minor concerto, inexhaustible in effects which their composer may have foreseen by the mystic prescience of genius, but which cannot possibly have been realised to him in actual sound, were written for tinkling clavecins, from which the deftest touch could not extract a breadth and mellowness of tone it was not theirs to give out—thin, thready, and metallic as were their utterances—one cannot be sufficiently grateful to the enterprising and persevering men who, aided by modern science, have furnished to contemporary executants such comprehensive means of adequately expressing the conceptions of great composers as are supplied by the pianofortes of English Brinsmead, German Bechstein, and American Steinway, not to mention many other makers of scarcely less excellence and renown. Before quitting the subject of the Brinsmead Concerts, laudably organised for the supply of a want that has long been a standing reproach to this vast metropolis—namely, winter musical entertainments of first-class quality, available to the public at moderate prices—I should mention that the vocal share in the first concert was allotted to Mr. Maas, who sang to the admiration of all present, and that the first of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, and the Coronation March from Moszkowski's "Joan of Arc" were executed with infinite spirit by the orchestra. If ever a musical enterprise deserved success it is this of Messrs. Brinsmead. Let us hope that it may obtain its deserts.

The "Monday Pops." for 1885-6 opened their twenty-ninth annual season at St. James's Hall on Nov. 9 with an admirable concert, well attended despite the turmoil of Regent Street and Piccadilly during a

general illumination in honour of the Prince of Wales's birthday, aggravated by the excitement that pervades the population of London on Lord Mayor's Day. The "Pop." in question was signalised by the *rentrée* of M. de Pachmann, who electrified his hearers by a marvellous performance of Raff's "Giga con Variazioni" (from the P. F. suite in D minor, opus 91), a composition so ingeniously overladen with technical difficulties as to trend upon the verge of impossibility. The gifted Russian pianist was warmly received and vehemently applauded; so was Mr. Edward Lloyd, who sang with his accustomed power, refinement, and purity of intonation. In the quartets of the evening (Beethoven in F., opus 59, and Haydn in D minor, opus 42) the place vacated *pro tempore* by Signor Piatti (who, I rejoice to say, is progressing rapidly towards complete recovery) was efficiently taken by Mr. Neruda, the husband of the paramount violinist who led the stringed "foursome" on that occasion. Nothing better or more "pyramidal"—to borrow a favourite critical epithet from my French colleagues—could have been desired by the musically pampered *habitués* of the "Pops." than the performance of both quartets—each a masterpiece in its kind—by the two Nerudas, Ries, and Hollaender. Haydn's quartet, in particular (I believe it to be the shortest of all his works of that class, and he composed over eighty) stirred the audience to demonstrations of delight somewhat unusual in the temperate and decorous gatherings for which Mr. Arthur Chappell provides such excellent entertainments. Moreover, Madame Neruda's solo, a Legend by Wieniawski, was unanimously redemanded—a circumstance betokening an unwonted fervour of spirits in a "Monday Pop." assemblage.

Following the Brinsmead novelty hard at heel, another new musical enterprise was introduced to the London public in St. James's Hall on the evening of Tuesday, Nov. 10, under the title of "Novello's Oratorio Concerts." Oratorio, ever since its invention, has always been more popular in this country than in Germany, Italy or France; and our metropolis, which already possesses two associations vowed to the production of sacred music, will welcome and can well support a third. The Novello undertaking, moreover, professes to strike out a line of its own with respect to works of this class; viz., to aim chiefly at the bringing to public notice of such sacred oratorios and cantatas as may be new—or, at least, unknown to metropolitan audiences—and deserving, in the opinion of leading musicians of the day, of submission to public judgment in London. Works of this description, as a rule, make their *début* in the provinces at one or other of the great festivals organised when society is "out of town," and the best executant talent is available to county impresarii. They come up to London later on with a cathedral-town stamp upon them, or "approved of" by Birmingham, haply. But Birmingham may frown upon a composition that will raise a smile of pleasure to the cheek of a Londoner; wherefore the Novello enterprise does not, as I understand, propose to be guided conclusively by provincial verdicts, but rather to give well-written works a metropolitan chance,

even should they have met with a cool reception at, let us say, Worcester or Hereford. It is also a part of the new impresa's plan of action to put forward the musical creations of living native composers—it may be inferred, in preference to those of foreign geniuses. The work selected for production at the opening concert was not altogether a novelty, having been before the public during the past two years; but the choice of Mackenzie's "Rose of Sharon" was probably suggested to the directors by a desire to pay a graceful compliment to the eminent composer by them nominated to the conductorship of the "Novello Oratorio Concerts." The intelligent audience that crowded St. James's Hall on Nov. 10 had every reason to congratulate itself on this selection; for the oratorio in question is a beautiful work, and it was admirably performed. Little need be said about the orchestra, in all essential respects the same as that which "functioned" at the Brinsmead Orchestral Concert on the previous Saturday. But the choir, 300 strong—the very *fine fleur* of London amateur vocalists—may not be passed over in silence, for it deserves signal and unstinted praise. We English are the best choral singers in the world, whether we be a musical people or not; and the new body of part-singers gathered together by Messrs. Novello is fully worthy to uphold our best traditions in connection with the performance of oratorio. The voices of which it is composed are for the most part delightfully fresh and tuneful, whilst a manifest enthusiasm pervades the singers, prompting them to emphasise all the "points" of their parts with fine eagerness and conspicuous intelligence. In a word, the Novello choir is one of which London may be proud. Its performance of the difficult "Rose of Sharon" music was good enough to rank as an "event" of the winter season. On the same evening Mr. and Mrs. George Henschel gave the first of a "cyklus" of "Song-Recitals" at Prince's Hall. The entertainment, though in many respects an interesting one, was slenderly attended; it consisted of selections from the less generally known lyrics of eminent German, French and English composers, and—perhaps somewhat too obviously—was animated by an instructional purpose. The Henschels are thorough artists, and, as such, fitting exponents or illustrators of different phases of musical culture; but his voice is coarse in quality, whilst hers is thin and wanting in sonority, circumstances which unquestionably marred the effects aimed at by the skilful vocalisation of both *virtuosi*. Moreover, a concert exclusively composed of songs soon ceases to be recreative, even to friendly "dead-heads," such as mustered strongly at the Henschel Song-Recital; for which reason, chiefly, I fear that this particular enterprise will not prove remunerative. The Richter Autumn Concerts, on the other hand, drew crowded houses, but they did not proffer any novelties of paramount importance to their numerous and enthusiastic supporters. The changes made by Dr. Richter in his staff of violinists have resulted in a perceptible deterioration of tone-quality in that department of his fine orchestra, but his leading remains inimitable, as well as do his readings of the Wagnerian excerpts which—whatever some of my fellow critics may think to the contrary—constitute the chief attraction of the Richter Concerts.

I think he would do well to reverse the order of his programme, as far as Beethoven and Wagner are concerned. The works of the former, to produce their full effect upon the audience, should precede those of the latter; they sound relatively tame and cold to ears that have been cloyed with the rich harmonies and voluptuous instrumentation of the Saxon Master. That a Beethoven Symphony should be an integral part of each and every Richter Concert is an excellent arrangement; but, in my opinion, it should be the first part, not the second. For one of the series Dr. Richter had wisely secured the services of Mdme. Valleria and Mr. Lloyd. Need I say that these great artists sang Wagner's sublimest due, from the Trilogy supremely well? No such rendering, to the best of my knowledge, has ever yet been achieved in Germany, but it must be remembered that the Fatherland has not, for some years past, owned so magnificent a tenor voice as that of Edward Lloyd. Frau Sucher and Frau Vogl, as dramatic *soprani*, can hold their own with Madame Valleria, all three being in the very first flight of that category of *prime donne*; but Niemann, Winkelmann, Gudehus, Goetze, *und wie sie alle heissen* are "not in it" with our gifted countryman, the best *tenore robusto* of the day. His singing of the "Preislied" in the "Meistersinger" alone puts them all out of court. By the way, the *finale* of "Rheingold," performed (I believe) for the first time in St. James's Hall at the third Richter Concert fell flat, though the audience was strongly leavened with neck-or-nothing Wagnerians. The fact is that, with few exceptions, the orchestral episodes of the Trilogy necessarily miss their mark in a concert-room, for performance in which they were never intended by their composer. They do not tell their tale intelligibly enough—what descriptive music does?—unassisted by scenery, action, vocal punctuation, and stage-effects. To produce the Rheingold *finale* without these was a mistake, which I hope Dr. Richter will not repeat next season.

All Mdme. Marie Rôze's friends and admirers, whose name is legion, were glad to learn that she had so thoroughly recovered from the severe indisposition which compelled her, last September, to interrupt her engagement with the Carl Rosa Company as to be able to brave the inclemencies of the Scottish climate, early last month, in order to fulfil the Queen's command to attend her Majesty at Balmoral, where the French *prima donna* sang no fewer than seven *soli* during the evening of the 7th ult. I am informed that she was in excellent voice, and that her rendering of the pretty Gavotte from Massenet's "Manon" elicited the rare compliment of an *encore* from the Queen, who personally redemanded that particular morçeau, the last of Mdme. Rôze's programme, and presented to her a valuable diamond locket-brooch as a "souvenir of her brief sojourn in the Highlands." It is always a marvel to me how rapidly some public singers —Mesdames Patti and Rôze, to wit —rally from sharp attacks of bronchitis with unimpaired powers of execution and tone-production. Apropos of this recuperative faculty, I should mention that Mr. Deane Brand's charming voice, temporarily clouded last season by a stubborn bronchial affection, has recovered all its pristine sweetness and roundness, and is as

rich in quality as it was when it first attracted my attention more than a twelvemonth ago. Although several comic operas and operettas have been brought out in London of late, this meritorious artist's name has not, I observe, as yet appeared in any theatrical bill of the past month. Managers, so I am told, appear to think that his vocal gifts are not to be relied upon, deducing that view from the ill-luck that befell him in connection with "François the Radical" at the Royalty last April. This is rather hard upon the public, whom it stints of Mr. Brand's capital singing, as well as upon that artist himself, but for whose self-abnegation and courage the opera in question could not have been produced at the time fixed for its presentation. Mr. Brand, I remember well, struggled manfully against illness, and, despite his doctor's warnings, to keep "François the Radical" going, the title *rôle* having been entrusted to him, and only gave up his part when imminently threatened with total voice-extinction. Rest and careful treatment have since set him right again; and, considering the beauty of his voice—a baritone in register, but with real tenor quality of exceptional mellowness—as well as the taste and feeling, combined with perfect truthfulness of intonation, which characterise his singing, I confess myself at a loss to understand why he is out of an engagement at this season of the year, when operetta vigorously re-asserts its sway over the theatre-going public of Modern Babylon.

Whilst I was holiday making in Wales with "the Queen of Song, throned on the Rock of Night" I heard with great regret that my old friend—a crony of twenty years' standing—Leopold von Hoffmann, the Intendant-General of the Imperial theatres at Vienna, which belong to the Austrian Kaiser, by whom, moreover, they are subventioned to the tune of about £60,000 a year, had joined the majority. So important a position, officially and socially, is that of the Emperor's theatrical manager, that it ranks in the I.R. bureaucratic hierarchy "with and after" the post of a Cabinet Minister. This latter office, indeed, had been held by Baron von Hoffmann before he accepted the high appointment in connection with music and the drama which he retained until his death. The earlier part of his public career had been spent in the Austrian Foreign Office, of which he became the Chief Secretary under the Beust Administration in 1867. He was for some years the confidential friend and factotum of the eminent Saxon statesman who brought about the long-desired reconciliation between Austria and Hungary; and to Count Andrássy, Beust's successor in the Imperial Premiership, he proved an invaluable *adjoint*. Later on, the portfolio of Finance was confided to him by the Emperor, with whom he was always a *persona gratissima*; but the management of Austrian Ways and Means proved too onerous a task for "Poldi" Hoffmann, despite his extraordinary capacity for disposing of routine work, and he soon besought his kind master to relieve him of so oppressive a burden. Just at that time another intimate acquaintance or mine, Jauner, had suddenly come to grief in the administration of the Hofoper and Burg theatre, and the Emperor offered the Intendancy of those Imperial establishments to Von Hoffmann, whose acquaintance with the *derrière des coulisses* (as His Majesty well

knew) was an exhaustive one. As a glorified manager, in gorgeous state uniform, all be-starred and be-ribanded—five years ago Hoffman Bismarck and Wertheim, the patent safe manufacturer, were the possessors of more Orders of Chivalry amongst them than any other six notabilities in Europe, not of Royal birth—Excellency "Poldi" was emphatically the round peg in the round hole. Under his kindly, watchful and tasteful *régime* the two great theatrical institutions of Vienna flourished exceedingly. All the novelties he produced in the way of opera and ballet at the Hofoper, and of drama at the Burg, were admirably cast and mounted; he treated the artistes submitted to his sway as friends, and contrived to keep them on good terms with one another; without resorting to the cheeseparing method he succeeded in making receipts meet expenses, a difficult problem to solve in establishments, all the working members of which—even the supers, carpenters, and boxopeners—are State-officials, inflated with a sense of their rights, dignities, and general importance. He was so popular a character in all classes of Viennese society, and appreciated his popularity so intensely, that he did not hesitate to allow himself to be caricatured on the stage of the opera-house in a ballet teeming with "local colour," having been assured by the ballet-master that the appearance of his "double" in a character-dance would be hailed by the general public as a "great attraction." It was so, and throughout an unusually long run of the *divertissement* in question the mimic Intendant-General, as he capered behind the footlights, was greeted nightly by tempests of hilarious applause. The light-hearted scorn of conventionality revealed by him in thus contributing to the amusement of the public by exhibiting a travesty of his own peculiarities of face, figure, and general get-up (which were scarcely less mirth-provoking than those of the late Baron Henikstein, for a quarter of a century the chief laughing-stock of the Kaiserstadt) touched a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the humorous Viennese, who, by common consent, pronounced "Excellenz Poldi" a "fescher Kerl," and elevated him to the topmost heights of their favour. His death was felt to be a public bereavement; and his remains, preceded by his sixty-four decorations, borne on velvet cushions by pages of honour, were followed to the grave by thousands of his fellow-citizens, sincerely mourning the loss of the sprightly, ingenious, and amiable gentleman who had catered so successfully for their recreation during his tenure of office at the Opernplatz and Burg-thor. All the theatrical companies in Austria, Hungary, and Germany were represented by delegates or floral offerings at his funeral; three Emperors, four Kings, and a score of Princes contributed wreaths, which were placed upon his coffin; and Austrian society, magnanimously condoning his *bourgeois* extraction (for he was the first baron of his name, ennobled as a reward for long and faithful service to the State), sent their gala equipages *en masse* to swell the *cortège* that escorted his body to the cemetery. As an old Anglo-Viennese, indebted to Leopold von Hoffmann for innumerable kindnesses during my long residence in the Austrian capital, I take leave to pay this slight tribute of gratitude and affection to his memory.

Amongst the later publications of Messrs. Chappell and Co. which have reached me during the past month are a melodious and sympathetic song by Isidore de Lara, entitled "Once and for ever," which will of a surety figure prominently in the concert programmes of next season; Gounod's "Hark! my soul," a composition scarcely up to that maestro's average of excellence; poor Hugh Conway's last song, "Remember me," agreeably set in the Scottish manner by Jules de Sivrai, under the inspiration of "Champagne Charlie;" "A Song of a Soldier," the words and music of which alike (by Messrs. Jaxone and Watson) are so spirited and catching to the ear that they ought to achieve a striking music-hall success; "Caught," a semi-comic ditty (Messrs. Oxenford and Romili), for which a similar future may safely be prophecied; "My Pet," a sprightly and taking waltz, and "Tabby," a somewhat commonplace polka, both by that inexhaustible generator of dance-music, Signor Bucalossi; and "Wedding Bells," a cheery, robust waltz of Mr. G. M. Lane's composition, prefaced by a broadly written bridal march, and fitted with a highly singable epithalamium for the voice. On the title-page chubby Cupids are playing the mischief with sprays of orange-blossom, heather-bells, smart slippers, and other nuptial accessories. A church in the distance points the moral and adorns the tale. Altogether, a decidedly attractive novelty. I have also received a quaint and very musicianly gavotte, hight "Beauty Spot," by Signor Clementé, whom I have long known as an able pianist and rising composer; and, finally, a charming melody by Mr. W. F. Amies, fitted to words quite unworthy of its intrinsic merits, although the verses in question were written by Charles Kingsley. The title of this song is "I once had a sweet little doll, dears." I can cordially recommend it to drawing-room singers on the strength of its musical claims to their attention. Mr. Amies should be encouraged to write more songs; for the gift of melody is unmistakably his, and in no stinted measure. I hear that Messrs. Chappell will shortly publish a new song by De Lara, to be named "Ever Adoring Thee." It has been my privilege to hear the gifted composer sing this song—one of his latest works—in private. He has never written anything better, and I venture to prognosticate that it will achieve at least as signal a popularity as "Only a Song," "Last Night," and "Mine To-day." Mr. De Lara is just now deeply engaged in the composition of a sacred cantata, the libretto of which is based upon Edwin Arnold's immortal poem, "The Light of Asia."

"THE FAY O' FIRE."

A romantic opera, in three acts, written by Henry Herman, and composed by Edward Jones.

Characters in Act 1 (A.D. 1385).	
Earl of Landogough	Mr. Frederick Leslie
Wickermark	Mr. C. Manners
Viscount Ceruleum	Mr. Fred Wood
Egobart	Mr. H. Walsham
Hendermon	Mr. W. Stanyer
Flaromen	Mr. Cooper Cliffe
Ina (The Fay o' Fire)	Mdlle De Laporte
Lady Blanche	Miss Marie Tempest
Wangar	Miss F. Melville

Characters in Act 2 (A.D. 1885).	
Duke of Landogough ...	Mr. Frederick Leslie
Marquis Ceruleum	Mr. Fred Wood
Egobart	Mr. H. Walsham
Flaromen	Mr. Cooper Cliffe
Burrows	Mr. H. M. Clifford
Ina	Mdlle. De Laporte
Lady Blanche	Miss Marie Tempest
Lady Allthere	Miss Agnes Consuelo
Alice	Miss Marian Graham

Since the production of the "Fay o' Fire" at the Opera Comique on the evening of the 14th ult. the sentences pronounced upon that work in

the columns of the London and provincial press have struck me, on the whole, as being characterised by a somewhat more rigorous severity than was imperatively called for by the intrinsic demerits of Messrs. Herman's and Jones's joint offspring, which, in many respects, does great credit to both its ingenious parents. I cannot help thinking, moreover, that some of my brother critics have scarcely laid sufficient stress upon the unusual excellence of the musical performance that ushered this sprightly first-born of a new artistic alliance into public life. Whatever shortcomings Messrs. Herman and Jones may be sternly held responsible for in the way of literary and musical inequalities, or even weaknesses, they deserve every musician's gratitude for bringing forward two young vocalists of the female persuasion to whose singing it is a delight to listen; singing that of and by itself constitutes an attraction quite sufficiently strong to draw "tout Londres" to the Opera Comique, whether the music sung be supremely good or not; singing, in short, of such uncommonly fine quality that one might "search Europe through, from Byzantium to Spain," in vain to "best" it in its particular kind. It is seldom, indeed, in this country, that one is agreeably surprised by such skilful and sound voice-production as that of Miss Tempest, or by so fascinating a delivery of sweet and mellow tone as that of Mdlle de Laporte, whose face and figure are as handsome as her vocalisation is accomplished and satisfactory. Were the "Fay o' Fire" far weaker and thinner than it is—the fact being that it displays considerable literary ingenuity and musical talent of a very high order—no one who takes pleasure in beautiful voices, irreproachable intonation, and perfect execution will have reason to regret being present at its performance. Of the two "leading ladies" to whom the above unqualified praise is justly due, Miss Tempest possesses the more evenly balanced and carefully trained voice. She was, I believe, an Academy pupil, and is known to the musical public in connection with oratorios and ballad concerts. On the operatic boards, however, she is in her true province, and cannot fail to achieve distinction. Mdlle de Laporte, on the other hand, received her musical education at Leipzig, and the German instructional habit of developing the upper register of the voice at the expense of the middle and lower registers has manifestly been brought to bear upon her. But every part of her voice, though one be unequal in force to another, is genuinely beautiful, and her management of it leaves nothing to be desired. She, like Miss Tempest, has a brilliant career before her.

The story of the "Fay o' Fire" would have furnished ample material for the supernatural prologue to a pantomime, or for a *féerie* well padded out with characteristic ballets and demon *divertissements*. It lacks incident, however, wherewith to render two long acts of an opera interesting. The first act is not overburdened with action; in the second there is positively none. In every respect the first act preponderates unduly over the second. In it the characters have something to do; the dialogue is frequently entertaining; two of the musical numbers (a duet for soprano and tenor and an ably elaborated *finale*) are so good that they fairly take the audience by storm; and several of the lyrics are consider-

ably above the average of poetical feeling and versification to which modern operatic librettists have accustomed a patient and long-suffering public. It contains one song which should be, and probably by this time has been, unhesitatingly excised—a dismal ditty about water, which, plaintively bleated on the first night by a lugubrious gentleman with little voice and less sense of humour, evoked loud manifestations of disapproval from a house obviously well disposed towards the novelty of the evening. Indeed, it was generally felt that the part of Ceruleum might be suppressed in both acts to the signal advantage of the opera. This British peer is a poor thing, exercising only too plainly a depressing influence upon both author and composer, whose only real use for him accrues in the sextet (Act 2), in which his part might very well be taken by some other character—if necessary, introduced for that special purpose. To cut out this weak-kneed proser would be to strengthen the piece. A similar operation, with a like effect, should be performed on Lady Allthere, vivaciously impersonated by Miss Consuelo. The part is superfluous and unsympathetic. It has nothing whatever to do with the plot, and is entirely forlorn of intrinsic interest. Whilst suggesting wholesome changes in the presentation of the "Fay o' Fire," I venture to hint to the management of the Opera Comique that they would do well to relieve Mr. Walsham of a costume (Act 2) that imparts to him the appearance of a glorified green gamekeeper—no Duke would give his daughter to a person who could be guilty of wearing such intolerable garments—and that it is unusual for foreign noblemen to walk about the country at the present day in black breeches and silk stockings. Anachronisms of dress are excusable in connection with so remote a period as A.D. 1385; but they should be studiously avoided when contemporary figures are put upon the stage.

Mr. Jones may be heartily congratulated upon by far the greater portion of the clever and charming music he has written to Mr. Herman's text. This young composer has the melodic gift, beyond all question, and his constructive faculty is of by no means a contemptible order, as an admirable sextet, a stirring finale, and much meritorious orchestral work convincingly denote. The influence of Schubert is perceptible in his melodies, and that of Meyerbeer in his instrumental distributions of tone-colour; whilst he is apt at times (no doubt, unconsciously) to borrow *motivi* from Strauss and Milloecker in the lighter of his strains. But he has a good store of original fancy to draw upon; and is always at his best when he depends exclusively upon his own ample resources of invention and contrivance. Of the artists who "created" the "Fay o' Fire," with one melancholy exception, I have nothing to say that is not frankly and conscientiously laudatory. Mr. Walsham, as ever, sang sweetly, and acted discreetly. Mr. Fred Leslie did wonders with a difficult and ungrateful part, even managing to amuse the audience by his intelligent delivery of a singularly dull ghost-legend, with which his buoyant spirits were heavily handicapped in the second act. The subordinate *rôles* of Wickermark and Flaromen were cleverly and tunefully sustained by Messrs. Manners and Cliffe, and Mr. Clifford made an excellent theatrical schoolmaster

"with a song," the *motivo* of which will be found in the "Beggar Student," Act 1, scene 1. The opera was splendidly set and mounted; the chorus-singing faultless; the orchestra (led for the nonce by Mr. Jones in *propriâ personâ*) meritorious throughout. Every department gave abundant proof of frequent and careful rehearsal. That a property demon quitted the stage in the manner of an angel—ascending to heaven instead of descending elsewhere—was only an unavoidable first-night mishap. But it was exquisitely funny, and elicited an even more unanimous outburst of hilarity than the ludicrous epithet applied by Mr. Herman to one of his characters—the inoffensive Wickermark—whom, by the mouth of Lord Landogough, he described as "a rhomboidal apple-sauce exterminator."

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

Our Play-Box.

"MAYFAIR.'

A Play, in five acts, adapted from Sardou's "Maison Neuve" by A. W. Pinero. Produced at the St. James's Theatre, on Saturday, October 31, 1885.

Lord Sulgrave...	Mr. C. Cartwright	Mr. Cashew	Mr. Paget
Capt. Marcus Jekyll... ...	Mr. C. Brookfield	Ogilvy	Mr. W. T. Lovell
Nicholas Barrable	Mr. Hare	A Servant	Mr. Sackville
Geoffery Roydant	Mr. Kendal	Agnes...	Mrs. Kendal
Mr. Perricarp	Mr. Maclean	Edna	Miss Webster
Mr. Jowett...	Mr. Hendrie	Hilda Ray	Miss Fanny Enson
Mr. Rudolph Rufford ...	Mr. A. Elwood	Priscilla	Mrs. Gaston Murray
Andrew Moorcraft	Mr. H. Reeves Smith	Louison	Miss Linda Dietz

THIS is a version of the indispensable Sardou's "Maison Neuve." The story is shortly this. A young stockbroker and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Roydant, are residing with an old and genial stockbroker in the humdrum district of Bloomsbury. From this they escape, take a house in Plunkett Street, Mayfair, where one of the most odious specimens of the aristocracy, an unprincipled Baron, Lord Sulgrave, proceeds to immesh the stockbroker's wife in his toils. Having been invited to live with the pair, the grand situation naturally follows. At the smallest hours of the morning he visits the lady in her *boudoir*, and being of weakly health, is seized with sudden fainting; then drinking off some chloral, intended for her, falls prone, and seemingly lifeless, on the ground. At this critical moment the husband returns, bringing with him a police-inspector, who, sitting down, proceeds to make a *procès-verbal*, examining the lady about a fraudulent cashier who has gone off with the monies of the concern. All through this trying ordeal, the inanimate body of the lord has been lying outstretched and concealed behind the sofa—a truly powerful situation as it may be conceived. After all, the heroine had been led into this adventure only to pique her husband, who also had been as innocently drawn into a flirtation with a not very respectable person. Mutual explanations following, a general indemnity is granted—the slate is wiped clean as it were—a return is made to good-natured old Barrable's in Bloomsbury, when the old and happier life begins again, it is hoped, to last.

Mrs. Kendal is conspicuously the most finished and accomplished of our actresses, and there is nothing she touches to which she does not lend grace and vitality. She rivals the stately mistresses of the French "scene," and their academic grace. Give her a powerful situation, some acute embarrassment into which folly and passion have forced an indiscreet woman, and she rises to it with an instinctive sense of reality that cannot be surpassed. Even when the situation is purely artificial or forced, this impression of finish and training supplies what is wanting. The present piece scarcely, however, offers her talents the most favourable opportunity. It has been well pointed out that the incidents belong to France, where there is a Faubourg, and "the grocer" or trader is the popular quarry of the man of position, and is heartily ridiculed for being victimised. It is an odd "concatenation accordingly" that the system of flats, the common stair, &c., should lend themselves, unfortunately, to high dramatic incident and favour the designs of wicked noblemen just as in the last century there was a comedy of intrigue known as the "Hat and Cadder" kind. The play, then, is an exotic that would have but a sickly growth in our social climate.

A more serious defect is the lack of a single central *motif*, which should direct the situations. Here there are several which distract and counteract each other. Thus, there is the ruin of the husband at the same moment as the great critical incident *de pas amours*, as the worthy Brantome has it. Now, in an ordinary family living in this practical country, when "a crash" comes it overpowers everything, and the most "delicate distress" in the world and tenderest passion vanish on the spot. It is like the ball-room the morning after the ball. The very ottoman under which the nobleman is concealed, is at the moment liable under execution of a bill of sale—a sad *douche* for romance.

It is curious that every lady, now "adapted from the French," if even discovered in a most compromising situation, is still, as was said of Queen Caroline, "pure as unsunned snow." In the original dress the metaphor does not apply. *The* situation is accepted *tout bonnement*, and we find, to our shame, dramatic interest, or, at least, logic, accordingly. But, by the fashionable "disinfecting process," we have a series of "innocent-guilty" dames. Discoveries are made: wicked barons and designing captains turn up at the small hours; no matter: it is all "unsunned snow." In the face of situations such as those in "Peril," "Impulse," and this "New House," it would need the most credulous husband to acquit. But he does so—for has he not implicit faith in his lady?

Mrs. Kendal, in her great scene, lent an air of probability to the whole, and, at the trying moment, when she had to give her testimony to the police, exhibited the double emotions of self-control struggling with terror and confusion in a remarkable way. Mr. Hare's Old Barrable has deservedly won great praise for its nature and high, and yet dry, geniality—an apparent contradiction which only your "well-graced actor" can reconcile. He is a cordial old business man this Barrable: shrewd, safe to consult in matters of investment. This suggests how admirably he

would do the old Bourgeois in the "Gendre de M. Poirier"—a piece in the vein of Goldsmith. There is a good part, too, for Mr. Kendal. But this by the way.

The other characters were pleasantly performed. There was a man-servant, very judiciously played. When we have Mr. Reeves Smith and Miss Webster about, who does not see what fare must be provided for them? A sort of idyllic and schoolboyish passion; and rather prettily it was presented. Mr. Pinero is nothing without his "scent of the Hay" (he must expect to hear of *that* till his dying day), but we have instead the "scent of the office," in the shape of a venerable, if not imbecile, clerk, who is led about in a kindly way, and speaks exactly with the voice of the senile rustic, so dear to the author. Mr. Brookfield scarcely goes to the heart of the character. He seems to depend on eccentricities of voice and "make-up." But these are reeds. If one might advise so clever an actor, he should throw away these arts as he would crutches, and cast his whole weight on a broad conception of character. These little devices, however clever, only cripple. And the lord—who preaches somewhat and gives the idea of wrestling with himself—it seems that there is a residuum of virtue left in him, lord though he be. He is half-hearted in his work and rather cavernous in utterance. It is a difficult situation, and difficult to play; and Mr. Cartwright lends a gentleness to the nefarious task in which he is engaged. He is a conscientious actor enough.

PERCY FITZGERALD.

Our Omnibus-Box.

Certain managers have once more called "wolf." Again, but very impotently, they have confronted us with that stale old bogey and exploded advertising "dodge," the "organised opposition." It has failed miserably, as it deserved to fail. The playgoing public is not to be coerced or to have dust thrown in its eyes in this fashion. We will take the two cases that have prominently come to notice during the month and shall endeavour to discuss them temperately. On the occasion of the first performance of "Alone in London," at the Olympic, the audience was not a bit more noisy, more critical, or more cantankerous than audiences are apt to be at theatres that from some misfortune or other have lost caste. We are not blaming the managers who have worked hard and done their best. Facts and circumstances have hitherto been against them, that is all. But it is well that authors should know, and managers should understand, that they cannot expect the same kind of audiences at an unfortunate theatre as at a house that is happily identified with successful productions. When Miss Marie Wilton and Mr. H. J. Byron opened that effete playhouse and dramatic "dust-hole," in the Tottenham Court Road, they did not address the same

style of patron or the same class of playgoer as when Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft played for the last time at the Prince of Wales theatre, and migrated to the Haymarket. It may be, as we are persistently informed by advertisement, that the days of Madame Vestris have returned to the Olympic, though what Madame Vestris ever, at any time of her career, had to do with popular, modern London melodrama only to be found in her day at transpontine theatres, will puzzle the old playgoer not a little. It may be that the mantle of Tom Taylor, who wrote the "Ticket of Leave Man," and many more admirable dramas, in the well-remembered days of Henry Neville, Kate Terry, Lydia Foote, Horace Wigan, George Vincent, and Mrs. Gaston Murray, has fallen gracefully on the shoulders of his clever successor; we hope it has. All that is necessary to insist upon is that there was no trace of Madame Vestris, or the Wigans, or Tom Taylor, or any one like them at the Olympic when the public was summoned to assist at the first representation of "Alone in London." It was uphill work, it is true, but the Olympic Theatre has for a considerable period been connected with failure and with plays that ought never to have been presented to the play-going public. Managers conveniently forget the past: they think only of the present. They belong to a race that has been petted and spoiled. They sometimes forget that they are the servants of the public: not its masters. They make speeches and dictate to their patrons, and this is what their patrons will never submit to, and never have submitted to, in the whole history of the stage. Audiences are not to be taught by any manager or manageress how to behave, and they will never submit to such dictation. They are not to be told when they are to applaud or when to condemn. That is their affair. Managers or manageresses, who respect themselves, will be respected in turn by the public. When they begin to speechify and harangue, there will be speechifying and haranguing on the other side of the footlights. From speechifying managers we have come to speechifying authors. These have also in recent times assumed a dictatorial tone and began to lecture their audience. The whole thing is a mistake, and the sooner it is amended the better.

No candid observer who has had any experience of audiences can honestly declare that the expression of public opinion on the first night of "Alone in London" was any stronger than what might have been expected at a theatre where good money has been continually taken for bad plays. You get a rougher style of audience at one theatre than at another. Opinions are now freely expressed in this pit and in that. When a theatre or a management has obtained the confidence of the public, then the public invariably extends its courtesy to the management. We shall be told that Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Henry Irving have both had altercation with their audiences, but was not that to be expected? If one manager for commercial reasons abolishes his pit and another protests against a public expression of opinion

however unfair it may be in his eyes, he speaks and protests at his own personal risk. But we very much doubt if Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Hare, Mr. Kendal, Mr. Wilson Barrett, Mr. Clayton, Mr. Cecil, and many others have, on the whole, had much to complain of in the conduct or attitude of their patrons, or can honestly say that any good work that they have placed before the public has failed to be recognised as it deserved to be. If we were to believe these stories of rowdyism and organisation and so on, our Lyceum, our Haymarket, our St. James's, our Princess's, our Court, would not compare as favourably as they do with sounder entertainments given at any other capital in the world. Where all the world over are such theatres and such audiences to be found ?

At the Olympic, prior to the production of "Alone in London," they put on a comedietta so indifferent, and so badly acted, that it deserved to be hissed off the stage. It was deservedly condemned. The most good-tempered house in the world has a right to condemn such a play, particularly as there is a general feeling that managers obstinately refuse to consult the wishes of their patrons who do not enjoy the privilege of reserved seats and who desire to be legitimately amused before the play of the evening. If managers do not understand these things they must be taught. Managers like Buckstone and Webster did not require to be told that opening farces ought to be amusing and well acted. They saw that it was done. But then they understood their business, and were not amateurs. They had experience, and when they opened their shop they understood the art of shop-keeping. At the first representation of "Alone in London" no scene was condemned that was good, no actor was ill-treated who had done, well. Instantly the good points of the play were singled out for approbation, instantly the best acting was rewarded. Do Miss Amy Roselle, Mr. Leonard Boyne, Mr. Herbert Standing, Mr. Tressahar, or Miss Grace Marsden complain seriously of the treatment they received? It seems to us that they met with instant sympathy. As to the reception of author and authoress, that is a point of tact and discretion and nothing more. We have always held and stoutly maintained in these columns that it is discourteous and unjustifiable to call for a man—worse still for a woman—and then to hiss them, but if authors and authoresses insist on appearing when the call for them is not unanimous they must take the consequences, disagreeable as they may be. Calls for authors have degenerated into a silly farce. The author who respects himself never comes.

Next morning everyone who was present at the Olympic play was astonished to find a managerial announcement in all the daily papers that there was "an organised opposition." The statement seemed preposterous. But what was the consequence ? Directly it appeared a few idle fellows with nothing to do, believing in the manager's

statement, offered their services to quell a phantom riot! This simple offer of some poor idle fellows on a wet day was construed into a deliberate attempt to blackmail. A mountain was made out of a mole-hill. The bubble burst instantly. It should never have been blown.

The Opera Comique scare was even more silly. Some playgoer in a momentary fit of irritability because he could not get some tickets is reported to have said he would bring in a hundred people to ruin the play if he was not attended to. So hungry solicitors, and police courts, and magistrates, and all the machinery of the criminal law were agitated to confirm a fact of which there appeared no proof whatever. If the Olympic blackmailers really did tell the police, as they are reported to have done, that they would create a disturbance if they were not paid, they ought to have been prosecuted by the police; if this phantom disturber really did threaten and conspire to ruin a play if he were not promised a seat, he should have been singled out for judgment, but as the blackmailers melted into the air, and as the irritable gentleman was never apparently discovered or exposed, all that can be assumed is that there was exaggeration somewhere.

When managers refuse to pack their houses on a first night, and when they learn to take a more moderate tone towards those who patronise them, they will have less cause to complain than they have at present. Just as critics refuse to be told what they are to write and say, and are intolerant of coercion in any form, not caring one brass farthing for the insolent statements of petted favourites, the vulgar abuse of restaurant loungers, or the testy absurdity of irritable managers, so do the playgoers resent any infringement of their valuable liberties. Let us have less speechifying and more work; more modesty and less assurance. The day when criticism is crushed by domineering artists, pot-house penmen, and social coteries, will be a very bad day for the stage. Let actors and actresses be content to act and hold their tongues about their social superiority, with which the public has nothing to do. They may be everybodies in their own estimable cliques, but on the stage they are nobodies save where their art is concerned. If any rowdyism exists on a first night, it may be found in the stalls and not in the pit. It will be discovered amongst the tavern-keepers and theatrical touts dressed up like gentlemen, not amongst the men who "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest."

Mr. W. J. Lawrence writes:—"Perhaps a few remarks in reference to the 'harlequinades' enumerated by Mr. H. Savile Clarke in his scholarly article on 'The Faust Legends' may not be inappropriate at this season of the year—especially to those, who, like Mr. E. L. Blanchard and myself, take a peculiar interest in the history of

Pantomime. First respecting Mountford's three-act 'farce.' The date of the initial production of this curious piece has formed the subject of some considerable discussion. Mr. J. Payne Collier—evidently misled by the year given in the 'Biographia Dramatica,' which is merely that of publication—actually says in a note to the 4th chapter of his 'Punch and Judy' that 'Mountford, the stage Adonis of his day, in 1697, *wrote* what was at that time called a 'farce' on the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus, &c., &c.' Chetwood, remembering that poor Will was done to death in the winter of 1692, craftily assumes that the much-disputed date is 1691. Geneste states that the piece was first acted at the Queen's Theatre, Dorset Gardens, 'between 1684 and 1688; and revived at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1697' (*Vide* I., 450). In an excellent paper on Pantomime, which appeared in the *Globe* during December, 1881, the anonymous writer states that Dr. Faustus was supported by Jevern, 'excellent in action and dancing,' and Leigh, the comedian, as the two drolls, Harlequin and Scaramouch, and gives the year of production as 1686. This is probably correct, as the two actors mentioned acted the selfsame characters at the same theatre in Mrs. Behn's farce of 'The Emperor of the Moon' in the year following; and Leigh's extreme intimacy with Mountford is shown by the fact that upon hearing of his assassination the former fell ill of a fever, and died a week afterwards in December, 1692. The plot of the Lincoln's Inn Fields pantomime of 'The Necromancer' is given in detail in the *Weekly Journal* of December 14, 1723. Hogarth effectively satirised the craze for this piece in his plate, Burlington Gate, No. 1. 'The Necromancer' and the Drury Lane 'Faustus,' by Thurmond (the production of which was singularly enough assigned to Covent Garden—not thought of in 1724!—by Mr. G. A. Sala in his essays on Hogarth, which appeared in the *Cornhill*) were the first British entertainments, according to Geneste, advertised as Pantomimes. 'The Necromancer' was probably the work of Lewis Theobald, the Blanchard of Lincoln's Inn Fields, seeing that several of the lines, and of Pope's notes are directed towards it in the 'Dunciad.'"

"Apart from the fact that Mr. Savile Clarke makes no mention of the piece, the minute synopsis of the twenty scenes in 'the new pantomime of Harlequin Dr. Faustus,' given by the *London Magazine* of December, 1776, is not without its measure of interest for the theatrical student. The account of the sixth scene is worthy of quotation, smacking as it does of the modern 'Transformation,' which, it must be remembered, did not make its appearance upon the stage until the advent of Madame Vestris, and the Lyceum extravaganzas:—'A beautiful garden; a rose tree in the middle, and eight large columns of flowers; the vista terminated with a fine perspective view of the country. He [Harlequin] strikes the rose bush, which changes into a table spread and covered with sundry fruits, which runs of itself to where the women sit; they at first are frightened; but Harlequin takes some of the fruit to encourage them. He then causes the columns of flowers to rise, which form a pleasing set of festoons across the top of the stage, and discover eight stone-images of the heathen

deities, with their several marks of distinction; the pedestals sink till the feet of the statues are even with the ground, and Harlequin animates them, and they, as if by clockwork, move, lay their different insignia on the ground, and take them up again; the pedestals rise up, and the images resume their former figures; during this the back scene is drawn up, and an elegant cascade is discovered. Harlequin conducts the women out; Meanwhile, his man comes forward, and resolves to partake of the good cheer; but his master coming behind him, causes a flash of fire to issue from the bottle, and the table flies up into the air.' The notice is defective in one important respect; no mention is made of the theatre at which this Pantomime was produced."

The theatrical tavern has gone somewhat out of fashion now-a-days, when so many clubs tempt men to supper after the play. The attractions of the Garrick, the Beefsteak, the Green-room or the Arundel are more potent than those of the old hostelries where the waiters paced a sanded floor and the chops and steaks were eaten in narrow boxes. Most famous among theatrical taverns in old days was the well-known Albion in Russell Street, Covent Garden, close to the classic portals of Drury Lane Theatre. There you were certain to meet a number of actors, and on *premières*, an equal number of critics, and that class of people—and a well-defined class it is, too—who are known as "first-nighters." And there, also, you consumed chops and steaks; poached eggs or Welsh rarebits; and partook of Mr. Swiveller's "modest quencher" amid much pleasant chat, mainly of a very "shoppy" and professional nature. Supper was the best-served meal at the Albion, but you could get a good plain dinner—say soup, turbot, and haunch of mutton; if, however, you ventured upon *entrées* all the sauces tasted as if they had come out of one pan. Venison in season was always very good, too, at this particular tavern, and the wines were of fair average character. The house was for many years largely patronised by actors, and, as one of *Mr. Punch's* bards has told us, at this hostelry

The shadows of a by-gone age,
My dreaming eyes behold,
The mighty men who trod the stage,
In all the days of old.
I see Macready, and the Keans,
Here presently assembles,
Each hero of a thousand scenes—
Your Garricks and your Kembles.

And coming down to later times,
I see amid the smoke
How Sothern heard the midnight chimes,
And Buckstone cracked his joke.
While actors of the modern school
Are here, of fame deserving:
Our Bancroft, and our lively Toole,
And Hare, and Henry Irving.

Of late years, however, the Albion has somewhat fallen from its high estate. The actors who frequent it—with some few exceptions—are not the best of their class. A popular manager, who was much valued left, and as the proprietor had not been educated where the proverbial "twopence extra for manners" was paid, many of the old stagers left the house and went elsewhere. Now, it seems, however, that the Albion is to have a new lease of life, for it has been purchased by Messrs. Spiers and Pond, whose name is a household word amongst us, and they promise to make it all, and more, than it was in the good old days. It will be redecorated and rearranged, but the improvements will be carried out in no iconoclastic spirit, but on the old lines, and comfort rather than splendour will be aimed at. A speciality, as before, will be made of suppers after the play and of dinners before it, and as the character of the firm stands so high for good cookery, sound wine, and attention to the wants of their customers, we may soon expect the Albion to be once more one of the most popular hostelries in London.

In the sumptuous volume which is on the point of publication by Messrs. Cassell and Co. as a Christmas gift-book, "The Royal River," Mr. Godfrey Turner thus gossips concerning Staines and John Emery:—"The Angel and Crown, which is traditionally associated with the Emery family, having been kept by one of that name in the days when John Emery was the recognised and unapproached stage Yorkshireman, is in the High Street. He played Tyke as probably no other man ever played that character; nor was he less effective in the monstrosities of the stage, Caliban being one of his pet parts, and Pan another. He had a fair range of Shakespearean repertory, being a terribly truthful Barnardine, in 'Measure for Measure,' and a capital Sir Toby Belch. In some panegyric memorial verses which appeared soon after his death was the line,

'And Farmer Ashfield with John Emery died.'

This praise was exaggerated and indiscriminate. The present writer was sitting many years ago at the Angel and Crown, in a mixed company of oarsmen, anglers, and residents, when he heard the performance of John Emery as Farmer Ashfield called in question. Somebody had extolled it for its rich Yorkshire dialect. Thereupon a grey-headed old man broke in with a quotation from 'Speed the Plough.' In the scene supposed to follow a ploughing-match, when Sir Abel Handy's patent invention has been kicked to pieces, and carried off at the heels of the frightened horses, Bob Handy answers his father's question, 'Where's my plough?' by turning to the farmer and enquiring the name of the next county. 'We ca's it Wilzhire, sur,' is the reply. The scene, in fact, is laid in Hants. The grey-haired man was an old actor, and he finished his pertinent reference to Morton's play with the quiet remark that he too

remembered Emery and admired him in Yorkshire parts, but that Farmer Ashfield was *not* a Yorkshire part. With a London audience in Emery's reign all countrymen were Yorkshiremen, just as 1 foreigners were Frenchmen."

The performance of "Colombe's Birthday" at St. George's Hall on Thursday the 19th ult., under the auspices of the Browning Society, was a success as Browning-Society successes go. Every one tried his (or her) best to believe that the play was not dull and incomprehensible, and a few succeeded in the attempt. At the end of each act there was warm applause for the actors, two of whom, at any rate, deserved the heartiest recognition. It is hard to believe that Miss Faucit, who said the part fitted her "like a glove," can have been more graceful and charming in it than was Miss Alma Murray. Mr. Browning is to be congratulated on finding such an interpreter. Mr. Leonard Outram put a great deal of force and sincerity into his playing of Valence, but the actor, who has to struggle with such speeches as the following (we quote fifteen lines out of forty-four)) is heartily to be pitied :—

> He gathers earth's whole good into his arms.
> Standing, as man now, stately, strong, and wise,
> Marching to fortune, not surprised by her.
> One great aim, like a guiding star above—
> Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift
> His manhood to the height that takes the prize ;
> A prize not near—lest overlooking earth
> He rashly spring to seize it— nor remote,
> So that he rest upon his path content :
> But day by day, while shimmering grows shine,
> And the faint circlet prophesies the orb
> He sees so much as, just evolving these
> The stateliness, the wisdom, and the strength,
> To due completion, will suffice this life,
> And lead him at his grandest to the grave."

Mr. G. R. Foss was admirably made up as Guibert, and played with some intelligence. The remainder of the courtiers looked rather foolish as a rule, but that was as much Mr. Browning's fault as theirs.

Our Melbourne correspondent sends the two following letters:—The Boucicaultian season at the Theatre Royal has proved a genuine success. On August 15 "Arrah-na-Pogue" was produced with "Korry" as a *lever de rideau*. "The Shaughraun" was again revived for a few nights, and Mr. Boucicault's Melbourne season closed on August 27, "Kerry" and "Arrah-na-Pogue" forming the bill. In the inevitable speech Mr. Boucicault told us that he was highly satisfied with the results of his trip, and intimated that his receipts had never been greater for a corresponding period. The entire company left for Sydney on August 28, and opened at the Theatre Royal in that place on August 29 in "The Shaughraun" to a packed house. It has been announced in the press that Mr. Boucicault is to marry Miss Louise Thorndyke, a member of his company, before the Australian

shores are quitted. Mr. Gerald Eyre, a member of Mr. Boucicault's own company, died on August 7, after an illness of forty-eight hours. He was buried on August 9 in the Melbourne General Cemetery. Mr. Geo. Rignold revived "Confusion" at the Opera House on August 10, and on August 17 the comedy was replaced by "Called Back." On August 29 Mr. Pinero's comedy "Lords and Commons" was performed for the first time in the colonies, Mr. Rignold and Miss Kate Bishop appearing as Lord Caryl and Mrs. Devenish. Miss Kate Bishop was married on August 12 to Mr. Lohr, the treasurer of the Opera House. "Lords and Commons" is but a short remove from a failure, and a revival of "The Romany Rye" is imminent. Miss Genevieve Ward presented "Mammon" at the Bijou Theatre on August 15, and on August 29 Mr. W. H. Vernon received a benefit, when "The Snowball" and "Woodcock's Little Game" formed the bill. On September 2 "The Queen's Favourite" was revived, and on September 4 Miss Ward benefits in "Lucrezia Borgia." Miss Ward next makes a up-country tour, including some thirty tours of more or less magnitude. A male and female minstrel company have been appearing at St. George's Hall during the month, and a scratch company are now playing "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The Nugget Theatre has been given over to the rabidly sensational, "Only a Barmaid," "The Poor of a Great City," and an atrocity, in numberless acts, entitled "Crime," being the *pièces de résistance*. The Theatre Royal has been closed during the past week for extensive alterations and repairs, but will re-open on September 5, when Mr. Frank Thornton appears in "The Private Secretary"—a comedy which has achieved an enormous success in Sydney. Mr. Harry Rickards begins his Melbourne season at St. George's Hall also on September 5. "Iolanthe" is now being sung in Brisbane, the capital of Banana land, as we affectionately term our youngest colony. Mr. Wybert Reeve is making a very succesful tour through New Zealand; Mr. Chippendale accompanies him. Mr. G. A. Sala is about to start on a lecturing tour in the same country. Mr. Geo. Darrell is playing "Sunny South" at the Theatre Royal, Adelaide. John F. Sheridan and "Fun on the Bristol" are somewhere in Northern Queensland; and Messrs. Leitch and M'Mahon are playing "The Pink Pearl" in Auckland.

On Friday, September 4th, Miss Genevieve Ward benefited, at the Bijou Theatre, in "Lucretia Borgia," and the well-known farce "A Regular Fix." On Monday, September 7th, Miss Ward and Mr. Vernon started on a tour of the principal inland towns, and are now playing at Ballarat, the second city of this colony. Miss Ward has arranged a magnificent performance of "Antigone" in our Town Hall, which is to come off during Cup week—our colonial Derby festival. The proceeds are to be devoted to the funds of a local hospital, and all the theatres have promised assistance. The prices of the boxes range from £25 to £100, single seats being sold at £1. It is expected that the entire sum required—£5,000—will be raised at this one performance. It is certain that no such gathering has ever taken

place in the colonies, and this programme will be one to look back upon as an event. The leading musical associations will perform Mendelssohn's music, and Miss Ward has given her services, besides organizing and superintending the entire arrangements. Mr. Frank Thornton opened a comedy season at the Theatre Royal on September 5th with "The Private Secretary." Mr. Geo. Leitch, some months back, produced a version of the same original, entitled, "A Deat Heat." Mr. Thornton has been extremely successful so far, but the attractions at the other houses are telling against him; and, besides, we have had a surfeit of this class of comedy, and yearn for something substantial. The last nights are announced, and on October 10th Mr. and Mrs. Williamson revive the popular American comedy "Struck Oil." Mr. George Rignold's venture with "Lords and Commons" at the Opera House turned out a failure, and "The Romany Rye" soon replaced it. "Adam Bede" is in steady rehearsal. Mr. Rignold intends to build a new theatre, which is to cost £40,000, and will, of course, excel any theatre yet built. They all say that M. Joubert's new theatre, the Alexandria, is steadily rising, and will be opened early next year. The rebuilding of the Princess is shortly to be commenced, so we shall have six first-class theatres, three minor ones, and a few promiscuous halls to revel in. On Saturday, September 5, another farcical comedy, "Mixed," adapted by Mr. Walter Craven from "Les Trois Chapeaux," was produced at the Bijou Theatre; and, despite its flimsiness and exaggeration, has proved an undoubted success. Mr. Craven claims a London run of two hundred nights for this comedy. The comedy is to be taken round the colonies, and has already been played in Sydney. Miss Helen Vivian and a weak company are playing cheerful dramas of the "Lady Audley's Secret" and "Aurora Floyd" class, and announce an original and startling atrocity on the 3rd inst., under the name of "Neck and Neck." Mr. Harry Rickards and his company are doing fairly well at St. George's Hall, and a variety company are playing "The Octoroon" at the Victoria Hall, the old drama being made a vehicle for hornpipes and negro minstrelsy. Mr. Dion Boucicault is playing a round of his pieces at the Theatre Royal, Sydney. He was married on September 9 to Miss Louise Horndyke, a member of his company. The knot was tied before the Registrar-General, the only member of Mr. Boucicault's family present being his brother, who owns a newspaper in Gympie, Queensland. Mr. Dion Boucicault, jun., and Miss Nina Boucicault will not return to America with their father, but will remain here under engagement to Messrs. Garner and Williamson. Mr. Geo. Danel opened a season at the Opera House, Sydney, on October 3 with "The Sunny South." Emerson's Minstrels are appearing at the Theatre Royal, Adelaide. Mr. Wybert Reeve, Mr. George Leitch, Mr. John Radcliff, and Miss Pauline Ri ta are on tour in New Zealand. "Fun on the Bristol" is being played in Northern Queensland.

"Human Nature," as our readers are aware, contains some stirring military scenes, the action being laid in Egypt, and it was a good idea then of Mr. Augustus Harris to decorate the handsome refreshment

saloons of Drury Lane Theatre with a collection of Soudanese and Egyptian arms, relics and accoutrements. Among the contributors to this loan exhibition are Viscount Wolseley, G.C.B., General Sir Gerald Graham, Admiral Sir W. Hewett, Captain the Earl of Dundonald, Lieut.-Col. Kitchener, Major Pigott, and others, and there are certainly some most interesting trophies and souvenirs of the Egyptian campaign. Here are banners bearing Arabic inscriptions, captured from the Mahdists, and the handsome suit of Soudanese chain armour presented to Lord Wolseley by the Khedive. Rosaries from the bodies of shiekhs killed at Gubat, Mahdist uniforms from Abu Klea, and crocodile shields from the battlefield of Debbeh next claim our attention, and a piece of Brusssels carpet is strangely enough a relic of considerable interest, for it was brought from Gordon's room in the dismantled Government House at Khartoum by one of Colonel Kitchener's messengers as a proof of his having duly arrived there. Mr. Chas. Williams, the well-known special correspondent, who did such capital work during the war, also contributes some very interesting relics of the martyr of Khartoum, sending a Martini rifle from one of Gordon's Nile steamers, one of his decorations, sword, spear, javelin, and Dongola knife. General Graham also exhibits a Soudanese kourbash, which was a parting gift from Gordon to himself, and a Koran found in Osman Digna's village. Mr. Villiers shows a Hadendowah shield and spear, picked up at El Teb, and there is an immense variety of Soudanese arms and ornaments, together with flags and other trophies. Here, too, are sketches by Messrs. Melton Prior and Woodville, and also a collection of military and naval medals, made by Colonel Eaton. We do not quite see the interest attaching to relics of Arabi, who was very little better than a common malefactor, but the visitors to the exhibition on the opening day seemed to take great delight in a sort of little Chamber of Horrors, where there is an exact reproduction of Arabi's cell at Cairo, with the carpet, chair, and table, &c., actually used by him. Altogether, the saloon is very effectively and tastefully decorated, and it will no doubt be a favourite promenade and lounge between the acts of "Human Nature." It should be noted also that the refreshments at Drury Lane are now dispensed by the well-known firm of Spiers and Pond, so that they will be found very much superior to those generally supplied under histrionic auspices. The improvement they have carried out is a very welcome one, and it will be especially appreciated by ladies. We all know what horrible compounds are usually given us at a theatre under the names of tea and coffee, but Messrs. Spiers and Pond have gone to the expense of erecting a regular still-room where those beverages can be properly and freshly made, a reform for which playgoers should be grateful. The Soudanese loan collection was opened in the middle of last month by Admiral Inglefield, who made a little speech which was responded to by Mr. Augustus Harris, a large number of fashionable, literary and theatrical notabilities being present on the occasion.

A new musical society has just sprung into life, under the title of "The Westminster Popular Orchestral Society." The aim of the society is very high, and the members intend, if well supported by the local public, to become a representative and permanent orchestral society. Their second concert took place on November 9 at the Westminster Town Hall, which was crowded by an enthusiastic but rather indiscriminate audience; and this is to be regretted. How is a society, in its infancy, to know if they produce good work, if they are equally applauded in all they do, be it bad or good? I should like to advise the society to dispense with the vocalists, if they cannot secure singers with some pretence to training; true, the lady was encored in all her songs, but surely this must have been by friends; as for the tenor, he was most of the time, and fortunately enough, almost inaudible. In the selection of the pianist, the society were more fortunate; Miss Florence Horn, if not a great virtuose, is a very pleasing performer; her brilliant passages, though very neatly done, lack power, but in simple pieces like Chopin's Nocturne (No. 9), she shows to advantage, playing with much taste and expression. Spohr's Violin Concerto, as rendered by Mr. Francis G. Hambleton, was a very tame performance; it is as an orchestra that the society shows best, but Mozart's Andante and Finale from Symphony No. 46 also suffered from tameness. The success of the evening was "Gavotte Nouvelle," by Walter Macfarren, arranged for orchestra by Mr. C. S. Macpherson, the conductor; the gavotte is not strikingly original, but very taking, and likely to become popular; it was well rendered by the orchestra, and at the conclusion, Mr. Macfarren, who was in the audience, had to respond to a call. The "Athalie" March, which closed the concert, showed the Orchestra at their best, and was given with a boldness which they were wanting in, during the other pieces. The "55 skilled performers" are mostly very young, and the society gives good promise; they play correctly, but their rendering of the different pieces is at present rather monotonous, and consequently a little dull; this, however, will probably wear off when they have played more together, at present they are feeling their way, but should be encouraged.

On November 10th, "The Busy Bees" swarmed to "School," which was held by special permission at St. George's Hall. A large and brilliant audience assembled to greet the old friends with new faces. First of all let me congratulate Mrs. Lennox Browne on the right spirit which made her undertake such a small andse condary part, as that of Mrs. Sutcliffe; any part is worth doing, when it is well done, and this was very good. She was well supported by Mr. W. T. Cope as Dr. Sutcliffe. Miss Margaret Brandon has a fine voice for the stage, and can act very well when the part is suited to her, but she is somewhat hard and cold; there was no tinge of tenderness about her Bella, and she too often assumes a tragic tone which does not fit the words. The school-girls, taken *en masse*, were very good; whether Mrs. William Harding's Naomi Tighe is Robertson's ideal or not is a question I will not enter into; as a typical school-girl, without any reference to this particular play, it was an excellent performance, full of

spirit and fun, and consistent in itself; but why did Mrs. Harding wear her hair cut short when it was necessary that in one of the scenes she should feel if her chignon was still in its place? Mr. A. H. Morrison played carefully as Lord Beaufoy, but wanted earnestness; it was impossible to believe for one moment that he really was in love. Mr. Frank Bacon's Jack Poyntz might have been good. I know Mr. Bacon can do excellent work, but this slavish imitation of celebrated actors, so often met with in amateurs and professionals, too, is an unpardonable fault; if Mr. Bacon were impersonating Mr. Bancroft, it might be to his credit to strive hard and fairly succeed in representing this gentleman's manner and his voice, but Jack Poyntz is the character to be acted, not Mr. Bancroft. The Krux of Mr. E. Burford Morrison found great favour with the audience, but was unduly exaggerated. The Beau Farintosh of Mr. Walter Barnard was a mistake. This usually excellent amateur has entirely misunderstood the part; his make up was too young, and altogether he was not in it. The stage-management was good, with the exception that once or twice the curtain was too late in coming down, and that some of the *entre-actes* were inordinately long.

Mr. Herbert James, a member of the Irving Club, gave two dramatic recitals at Steinway Hall on November 11 and 14, the second being by far the most successful, Mme. Marian McKenzie assisting as vocalist, Mr. W. Henry Thomas and Mr. Frank Lewis Thomas as pianists. Mr. Herbert James has a good voice, but too often speaks in an under tone, and a whisper when considered necessary or effective should be indicated; when a reciter actually whispers, the audience loses the words. On principle, I do not think it good for young reciters to be too much addicted to the change of voice for each character, until they have gained complete mastery over their own voice, and can render every degree of light and shade in its natural tones; by this I mean perfect mastery of every modulation, and this is not attained by the sudden dropping of the voice at the end of the sentence. These remarks do not apply to Mr. Herbert James alone, but to reciters in general. As I said before, his voice is very good, but uneven, a fault easily conquered by study. One habit Mr. Herbert James should check at once—no doubt he is unaware of it himself—that of swaying his body from side to side whenever emotion or rapidity is needed; the violent taking in of the breath almost amounting to a sob should also be used sparingly, although occasionally, as in "The Dream of Eugene Aram," it is effective. This and "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell," by Gilbert, were the best rendered pieces of the first programme. The "Dream" was free from the great exaggeration too often given to it; the second was given in an assumed voice, but the same throughout. "The Slave's Dream" (Longfellow), "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" (A. Browning), Act 1, scene 2, "Hamlet;" "The Leper" (Willis), "Ode to the Skylark" (Shelley), and "Mokeanna" (Burnand), completed the programme. The last-mentioned piece lost much of its point by the reciter not appearing sufficiently convinced of what he was relating. For the second recital,

Mr. Herbert James was in better voice, and, I think, had a more sympathetic audience, and this is a great help to a reciter. He first repeated "The Slave's Dream," not in the programme. Let Mr. H. James beware of a certain tendency to a pretentious delivery. "The Jackdaw of Rheims" was fairly given, but lacked quaintness, and the scream at the sight of the poor bird was rather overdone. Act 1., scene 7, Act 2, scenes 1 and 2, "Macbeth" followed. Every reciter should study Shakespeare, the best of all studies, but it does not follow that one is capable of reciting him in public. Mr. Herbert James is decidedly overweighted, and the silly voice assumed for Lady Macbeth shows that if he has studied Shakespeare he does not yet understand him. In "Homeward Bound" (A. Proctor), Mr. James found himself in his element; he was simple and earnest, and managed his voice to better effect, infusing real feeling into his recitation. The same remarks can be made of "Sentence of Death on the High Seas" (Matthison), the closing item of the programme. "Etiquette" was good and quaint, and showed much appreciation of Gilbert's peculiar humour. "The Demon Ship" was hardly intense enough, the climax which ought to be unexpected was not sudden enough. "King Robert of Sicily" was rather dull and given in an under tone. For "The Perils of Invisibility" "Only a Pin" was substituted; this clever trifle was excellently delivered. A judicious choice of pieces, practice of the voice, and study of the author's meaning, those are the three great points for a reciter. In some things Mr. Herbert James is very good; his faults can be easily conquered; above all, let him avoid being pretentious—simplicity is one of the greatest merits. Let Mr. Herbert James understand that the adverse part of my criticism is given in a kindly spirit. I should not waste advice on one not capable of turning it to good account.

I have received the following from a Greenock constant reader for many years:—Some notes on local theatricals may interest you. "Diplomacy" was here last week, and was very fairly done, Baron Stein being particularly good. You talk, in this month's THEATRE, of little bits of acting that set people thinking when the curtain is rung down. Since January last, I have often thought of that scene where Dora tells her mother that a man offered her wealth and position, adding that his *wife* need never know, and how she flung the bribe in his face, and told him bravely what he was at heart. I heard the same words the other night—and soul-moving words they are, too—but the passion seemed to have departed from them, and I longed for a brief three minutes of Miss Calhoun.

Mr. J. L. Toole has just concluded a very successful engagement at the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow. Friday was his benefit, and on that occasion he produced a new farcical comedy, by Maddison Morton, entitled "Going It." Of course it was a success, for everything that Mr. Toole does he does well, and Mr. Gossett is surely a character after his own heart. The play is slight enough in itself, but Mr. Toole is on the stage nearly all through, and the audience forget the play in shrieks of laughter at his love-making to a very fascinating widow. After this came "Mr.

Guffin's Elopement," with the ever-welcome "Speaker's Eye," and then an Election Speech, followed by a few words from our favourite, whom we are not going to see again for a year. May his shadow never grow the less, and may it be seen twelve months hence on the Esplanade in this town.

I cannot conclude these fragmentary jottings without a hearty word of thanks to Mr. Marshall for his very excellent article in this month's THEATRE. I often wish that the author of "The Triumph of Time" would raise his voice against the "Dramatic Pharisee." Does it never occur to good people who write balderdash about the stage, that it is not *everybody* who has a comfortable drawing-room to recline in after dinner, with a Duplex lamp, nice books, and, perhaps, a liqueur-stand handy? Is it altogether fair that men who have either been born with golden spoons and forks in their mouths, or who, by their own talents—and nobody respects Cardinal Manning more than I do—have raised themselves to a high position in the land—a position of luxurious ease after the work of the day is over—should seek to prevent others, whose minds are just as pure, from cultivating a natural taste for all that is good and noble and beautiful in their leisure time? In these days of progression. as Mr. Marshall truly says, the Church has to do all she can to stand against the attacks of sceptics and others. Is it an argument in her favour that Bishops forbid the opening of museums on Sundays (excepting the Zoo, open to the rich and *not* to the poor that day); that sentence of excommunication is pronounced on those who prefer the theatre to the gin-palace; and that a Cardinal and an Archbishop are to be found on a commission of which we have heard far too much? Surely not, sir, Once more many thanks, Mr. Editor, for all *you* have done, fearlessly and honestly, for a much abused but sterling cause.

One of the best and brightest of comic operas is "Erminie," first produced at Birmingham on October 29, and acted at the Comedy Theatre on November 9. Messrs. Claxon Bellamy and Harry Paulton have taken our familiar friends, Robert Macaire and Jacques Strop, for the central figures of their story. These two rascals, thinly disguised under the names of Ravannes and Cadeau, rob a certain Viscomte de Brissac, bind the youth to a tree, and, arriving at the Marquis de Pontvert's château, Ravannes passes himself off as de Brissac, introduces his cowardly companion as "the Baron," and is betrothed to marry Erminie, de Pontvert's daughter. The two rascals stay at the château, where they have plenty of pockets to pick, until their trick is discovered, when they are bound and handed over to justice. The two acts are of the right length, and full of honest fun. M. Jakobowski's music, though not strikingly original, is appropriately melodious, and Miss Melnotte has placed the piece on the stage in luxuriant style. It is fortunate for the opera that the *rôle* of the heroine has been allotted to Miss Florence St. John, who looks quite as charming, and sings far better than ever. Her rendering of "The Sighing Swain" is one of the daintiest and most delightful of musical

treats that has been heard in London for many a long day. The Macaire and Strop of the story could not be in better hands than those of Mr. Frank Wyatt and Mr. Harry Paulton, the one agile, full of spirits, and grimly grotesque, the other solemn, seemingly shivering with fright, and dryly humorous. The minor parts are in capable hands, and the opera has deservedly secured a great success.

"Alone in London," the drama by Mr. Robert Buchanan and Miss Harriet Jay, brought out at the Olympic Theatre on November 2, is a drama of an old-fashioned type, loosely put together. Some of the incidents are admirable, but the good ideas in the play are swamped by the lack of stage-knowledge displayed thoughout. And something too much has been attempted in the matter of revolving scenery, although no one will deny the stirring effect of the scene in which the villain opens a Thames sluice-gate on his wife. Mr. Leonard Boyne has made a hit as the good-hearted, honest mill-owner, who is rejected by the heroine, and Mr. Herbert Standing is excellent as the easy-going, smiling villain. Miss Amy Roselle, it need hardly be said, is intelligent, interesting, and pathetic as the heroine.

Mr. Charles Warner, whose photograph appears in this number of The Theatre, was born in Kensington in 1846. For a short period he was in the office of an architect, whose profession it was intended he should follow, but having no special inclination towards this end, and "supposing that the pursuit of a theatrical career would not be sanctioned at headquarters," he ran away, and took an engagement in a small provincial town as "utilitarian." After remaining in the provinces for some time studying the rudiments of the dramatic art, he came to London in 1864, and made his *début* on the metropolitan stage, at the Princess's as Romeo. Thence he went to Drury Lane, where he was engaged for three years, under Mr. Chatterton's management, and played in various Shakespearian revivals. Subsequently Mr. Warner became a member of the company at the Olympic Theatre, and there, in the part of Charley Burridge, in a comedy by H. J. Byron entitled "Daisy Farm," won his first success on the London stage. In 1872, he was a member of the late Mr. Bateman's company at the Lyceum Theatre. In July of that year, in an adaptation of "Medea in Corinth," by Mr. W. G. Wills, Mr. Warner acted Orpheus. He remained with the Lyceum company for two years, and afterwards joined the company of the Vaudeville Theatre, under Messrs. James and Thorne's management, and attracted favourable notice there by his painstaking acting in various parts. Of these, the following are deserving of mention, viz., Puff in "The Critic," Charles Surface, and Harry Dornton in "The Road to Ruin." Mr. Warner was the "original" Charles Middlewick in "Our Boys," first performed at the same theatre on Saturday, January 16, 1875. A character in the presentation of which Mr. Warner secured well-merited praise was

"Friends I have made, whom envy must commend,
But not one foe whom I would wish a friend."

CHURCHILL.

Charles Warner

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD,
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that of Vladimir in "The Danischeffs." In 1878, he was engaged at the Princess's Theatre, appearing as Henry Shore in Mr. Wills's drama of "Jane Shore." In a revival (1879) at the same theatre of Charles Reade's drama "It's Never Too Late to Mend," he performed the part of Tom Robinson.

On Monday, June 2, 1879, first performance at the Princess's Theatre of Mr. Charles Reade's version of the French play constructed out of M. Zola's novel L'Assommoir, and entitled "Drink," Mr. Warner made a memorable success as Coupeau. Of his performance of this part, the critic of the *Daily News* wrote:—"In this piece Mr. Warner rises to heights of dramatic power which far exceed expectation, based upon any other of the characters in which he is familiar to a London audience. It is doubtless true that he follows with unvarying fidelity the conception of the character created on the stage of the Ambigu. But the impersonation is none the less a striking and overmastering effort of mimetic genius. The entry of Coupeau in the sixth act, when he returns to his beggared home, sent a sensible thrill of horror through the crowded and excited audience. His make-up is wonderful, and his voice, looks, and gestures are even horribly realistic. The unsteady walk, the thin yet bloated face, the wandering eyes, the lean, live fingers that clutch at nothingness and are never quiet, tell without need of spoken words the story of his fall. The scene grows in intensity as it progresses. When the eager and tremulously joyous wife goes out to find work for him, and hopes to get a small advance of money to buy bread, *Coupeau* is left alone with the supposed bottle of claret which the treacherous Virginie has sent in. Shall he have half a glass just to warm him? The thought of the generous liquor infuses animation into his miserable body, and with trembling hands he unwraps the bottle and takes out the cork. 'What a body it has got for claret,' he says, as he sniffs at it. Then a spasm of horrible delight thrills him as he makes the discovery that it is brandy. He recoils from it and crouches at the other end of the room, putting all the space possible between table and wall, between him and tempter. The doctors say it will kill him, 'but, then, doctors tell such lies.' He will just taste it. With horrible, gleaming eyes and convulsive fingers he approaches the table, seizes the bottle, and drinks. At first the spirit revives and strengthens him, and with new vigour he rushes out of the room, carrying the bottle with him. When he comes back his wife has returned, and finds him a raving maniac with the empty bottle. So he dies on the stage, the audience being spared no detail of *delirium tremens*. Whether this is legitimate art or desirable effect is a matter for individual opinion. But there can be no question of the power and intensity with which Mr. Warner represents the most terrible scene ever presented on the English stage."

In addition to Coupeau, Mr. Warner has played the following original parts in his long engagement at the Adelphi which terminated only last summer :—Michael Strogoff, in the play of that name, by the late Henry J. Byron, on March 14, 1881 ; Walter Lee, in Mr. Henry Pettitt's drama, " Taken from Life," on December 31, 1881, Christian, in Mr. Robert Buchanan's " Storm Beaten," on March 14, 1883 ; Ned Drayton, in Messrs. Sims' and Pettitt's " In the Ranks," on October 6, 1883 ; and Frank Daryll in " The Last Chance," on April 4, 1885.

Our other portrait represents Miss Eastlake in " Hoodman Blind." Her performance of the dual rôle of Nance Yeulett and Jess Lendon in this play is quite the best performance that this actress has yet given.

What is Love ?

LOVE is a lad with an arrow and bow,
Love is an impudent, mischievous fellow,
Love is caressed by the maidens who grow,
Love is the friend of the men who are mellow !
Love is an archer, with hearts for a mark,
Maybe he struck me, or maybe he missed me,
Love is a wandering spirit, and Hark !
Love is about, for my Milly has kissed me !

Love is a pedlar, with grief in his pack,
Love sells us joy, but more frequently sorrow,
Love is a fickle young lad with a knack
Of remembering to-day but forgetting to-morrow.
Love is the herald of weal and of woe
Crying " I'm King ! and there's none can resist me."
Love is a rascally thief, and I know
Love has been here, for my Milly has kissed me !

C. S.

"Will you wish me luck?"

HOODMAN BLIND.

Miss Sanderson

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE THEATRE" BY BARRAUD

263, OXFORD STREET, W.

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JOHN HOWELL
IMPORTER
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